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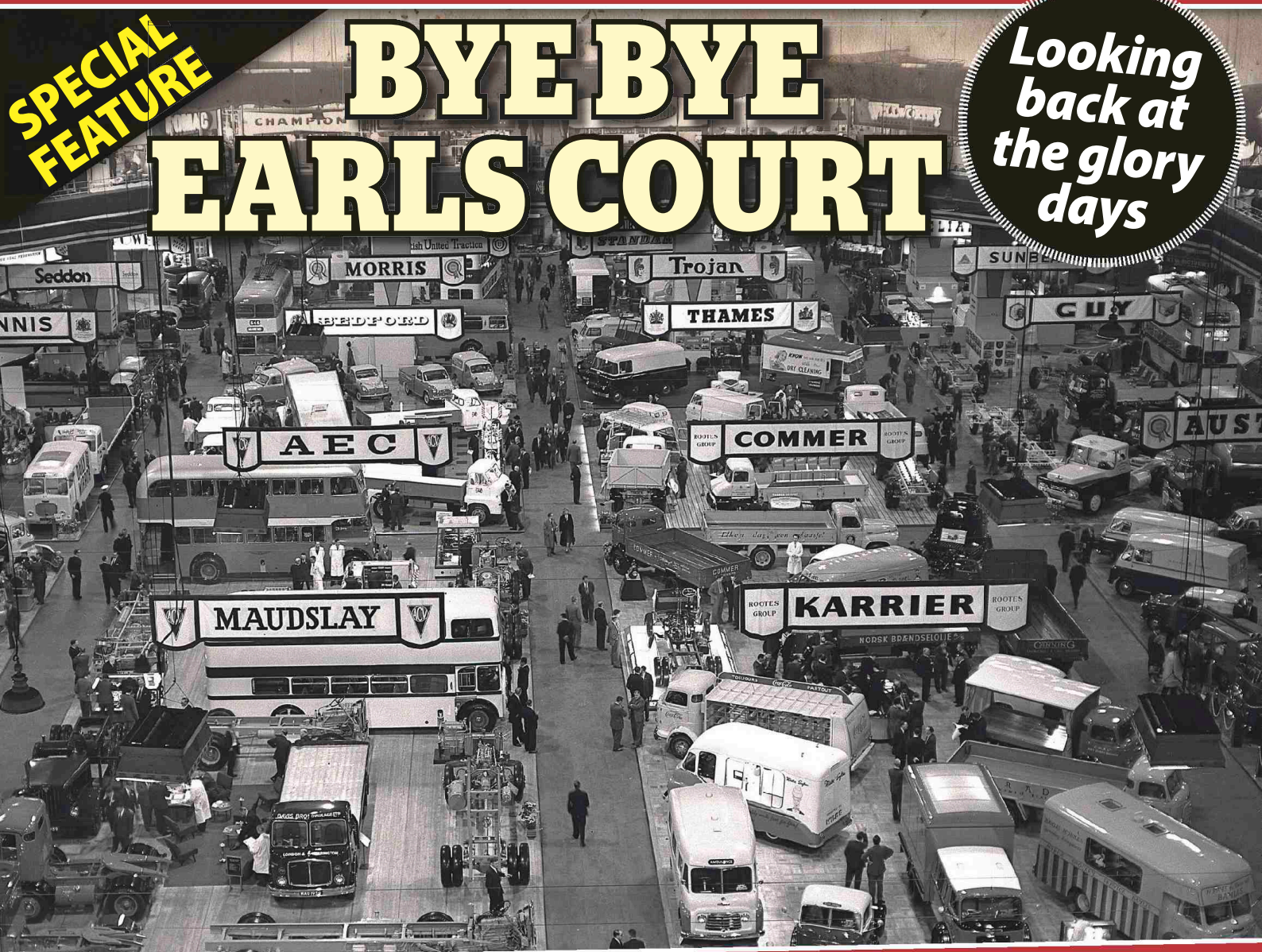
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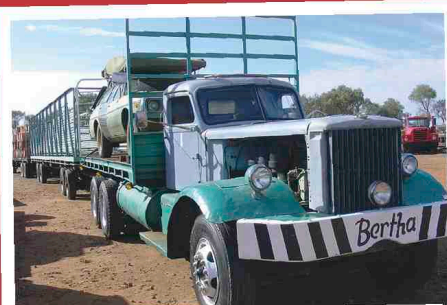
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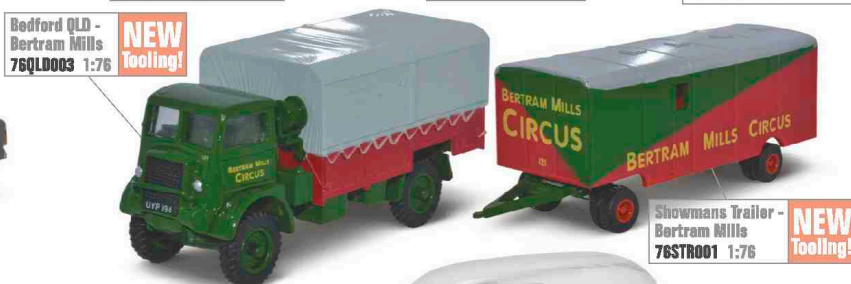
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**T**his month's issue is a little different, as we have two main themes – Earls Court commercial vehicle shows and vehicles, mainly British, seen in other parts of the world. We hope you enjoy this change; if not, don't worry, normal service will be resumed in the next issue...

We have majored on the commercial vehicles shows of the past at Earls Court, as the news has broken that yet another part of our iconic heritage is going to be pulled down, as ever, to make way for luxury flats. However much these are 'needed' and however much of a 'white elephant' the exhibition centre might have become, it seems dreadful that such a wonderful building cannot be saved and a use found for it.

The majority of the pictures of new vehicles taken at shows which we use in our regular 'Scenes Past' and other features were originally taken at Earls Court, so we really do owe the old place a special 'goodbye'.

I have to confess that, unlike our Malcolm, I did not visit a commercial vehicle show at Earls Court, but I did go to the Motor Show as a lad – embarrassing the stand staff by loudly proclaiming that the Mini was not fitted with the new 'Hydrolastic' suspension it was supposed to be displaying. Then I went on a works outing (me and the boss) to the Cycle and Motor-cycle Show, when I was a 'Saturday boy' in a cycle and hardware shop. That was

exciting; but I persuaded him to buy one of the first 'Chopper' bikes, which took ages to sell, as they didn't catch on immediately...

I was also involved in the Smithfield Show build-up, when I was working in public relations for an automotive 'client' (as we always seemed to call them – who knows why not 'customer'?) Of course, I have been to many CV shows at the NEC, plus the last Scottish show at Kelvin Hall and the first at the SECC, not to mention a few of the Continental shows.

But I would have liked to have gone to Earls Court. Seeing all the pictures we use of the commercials, which we now can only see at rallies, only makes me wish I had been there at the time. Those that know us would probably smile at the thought of either Malcolm or me, trussed up in a suit, collar and tie, as we would have had to be in those days, but I think it would be worth it – probably my first choice if anyone ever invents a time machine...

Moving on, we also have several articles this month about vehicles abroad, in Australia, New Zealand and Malta, where there still seem to be plenty of old British vehicles to be seen. Some are still in use, others at rallies, while others are just awaiting a saviour – but they're still there, just a long way away, unfortunately. At least we can enjoy them in the pictures in the magazine.

There will be some more next month, along with plenty of our usual fare. As always, if you

have memories connected with what you see in Vintage Roadscene, please share them with us, especially if they are accompanied by pictures. We can't bring back 'the old days' but this is the next best thing...

## ON THE COVER...



In this issue, we have a special extended 'Scenes Past' looking back at the Commercial Motor Shows at Earls Court, to mark the unfortunate demise of this iconic building. On the cover, a high level shot shows many of the stands at a late 1950s show, under their traditional banners, with all sort of interesting vehicles. AEC is using the technically-dead Maudslay brand to obtain a larger stand space, with a Mercury rigid; on the Karrier stand there is a Coca-Cola 'Gamecock'; a 'Mister Softie' ice cream van and Smiths mobile shop. There's also the new Ford Thames Trader and 400E van; there's the Bedford 'S' and 'J' Types, a BUT trolleybus and that amazing bonneted Guy Invincible among others. This is the sort of picture you can study for ages. Maybe we should fill a magazine with them one day... (CHC aar072)



We don't just throw this magazine together, you know, and to prove it here we have a picture which ties together the main themes of this issue. At the 1948 Commercial Vehicle Show at Earls Court, here is a Maudslay 'Mustang' twin-steer platform lorry, destined for Gonzalez Byass, the producers of wines and spirits of Jerez, in Portugal, which was a good market for British vehicles in those days. Behind it is a Duple-bodied coach and you can just see the horsebox, which Malcolm mentions in our Earls Court feature. This would have been the last time 'real' Maudslays like these would have appeared at the show, as later exhibits were 'badge-engineered' AECs, after the company was taken over. (CHC aau263)



# SIMON SNORKELS 2



*Ron Henderson continues the story with a look at the 85ft Snorkels.*

**T**he introduction of hydraulic platforms was initially a gradual process, use by the fire service being constrained by the manufacturer's limited range of 50ft and 65ft equipment. However, in 1965, Simon Engineering announced the impending introduction of an 85ft Snorkel hydraulic platform.

This coincided with a wholly new entrant into Britain's fire engineering manufacturing scene,

**Top:** The massive Snorkel arms and main frame, complete with two pairs of 'A' frame jacks, mounted onto an ERF84Rs chassis, prior to having the cab and body fitted. The heavy duty 'A' frame jacking system completely raised the rear wheels from the ground to form a stable working base.

**Right:** Scotland's Northern Area Fire Brigade was the first British fire brigade to commission an 85 ft Snorkel. Based at Inverness, the unusual addition of a tartan band on the front was from the Macintyre clan, the Firemaster of the brigade being Eric W MacIntyre.

when ERF designed two new chassis specially for fire service applications, a most unusual move at a time when fire engines were based on existing commercial vehicle chassis.

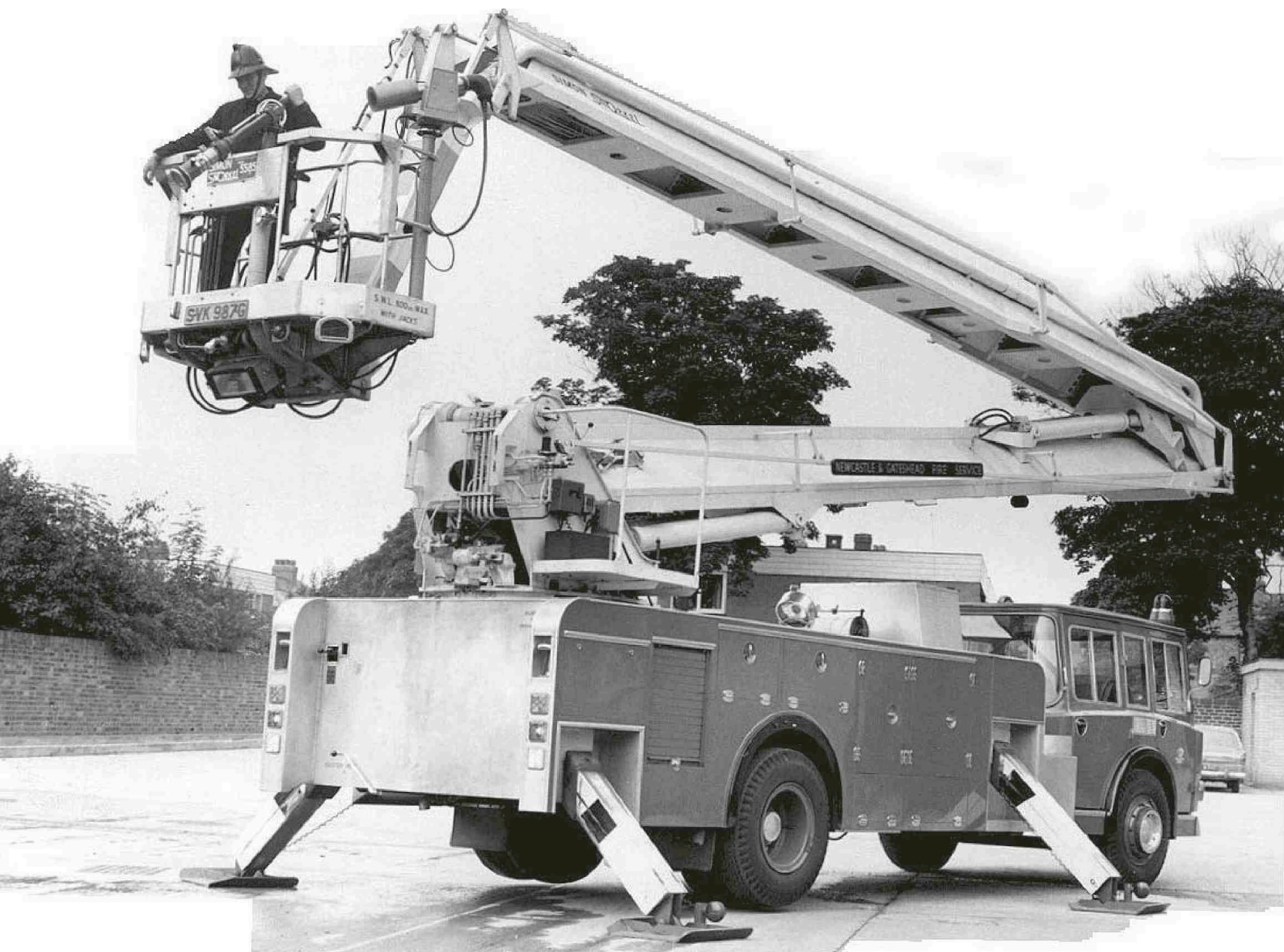
ERF initially offered two chassis, the 84PF for pumps and pump-hydraulic platforms and the 84RS, a heavy duty chassis intended to carry Simon's new 85ft platform. The new ERF 84RS chassis was powered by a Rolls Royce B81 eight cylinder petrol engine, developing 235 bhp

at 3750 rpm, with a five speed synchromesh gearbox. A Perkins V8-510 diesel engine with Allison automatic transmission was later offered as an option.

The chassis was suitable for a gross vehicle weight of 16 tons on a wheelbase of 17ft. The glass-fibre crew cab, manufactured by Jennings of Sandbach, could accommodate a crew of five and featured a novel arrangement, made up of two forward cabs joined back to back. A short







**Above:** Newcastle & Gateshead Joint Fire Service received this Fulton & Wylie-bodied Snorkel in 1968. The short third boom, to which the cage was attached, was a characteristic of the 85 ft Snorkels. This machine was equipped with a demountable Marconi CCTV camera, fitted on the cage on a 7 ft extension pole, which could transmit aerial views of a fire to a television receiver housed in a big side locker.



**Above:** Glamorgan Fire Brigades 85 ft Snorkel was most unusual. Notwithstanding the white over red livery, it was also the only one to be based on a six-wheeled chassis. It was pictured at the 1969 annual Chief Fire Offices conference, held that year at Harrogate exhibition Centre. (Ian Moore)

two door three man cab was also offered.

The 85ft Simon booms were to the same design as the smaller earlier products but, of course, were much bigger and heavier, and there was the addition of a short third boom connecting the cage to the second boom. Up to seven adults could be carried in the cage during rescue operations, while a water curtain system in the base of the cage was fitted as standard, as was a 500 gallons per minute monitor. A breathing apparatus system was offered as an optional extra.

The booms could be controlled from ground level, as well as from the cage, although movement of the short third boom was restricted to cage control only. The maximum height of elevation was 85 ft and there was a horizontal reach of 41 ft. Built-in pumps and small water tanks were also available as options, the shorter models having PTO-driven pumps, while the 85ft models had self-contained engine-driven pumps.

These were big units. At 37 ft long, they were





**Above:** Some fire brigades opted for ERF 84RS machines with shorter 70 ft Snorkels. These were identified by the reduced forward overhang and the high mounted cage at the rear, in the absence of the third boom of the larger units. This one was delivered to Denbigh and Montgomeryshire Fire Brigade in 1974 and was pictured on the forecourt of Rhyl fire station in 1977.

the biggest fire engines so far seen on Britain's roads. Their use was supplementary to turntable ladders, rather than as replacements, although this recommendation was overruled in some areas.

Turntable Ladders were traditionally 100 ft in length, offering a reach some 15 ft further than the new 85ft Snorkel, but the Snorkel also offered much greater versatility. The prototype, ordered by the City of Lincoln Fire Brigade, ironically to replace a war time turntable ladder, made its debut at the 1966 Commercial Motor Show at Earls Court, followed by exhibition at the Institute of Fire Engineering conference at Southport the same year.

The first example to be placed into service in Britain was with the Northern Area Fire Brigade, for service at Inverness. Its other claim to fame



**Above:** As well as the usual Jennings cab, other coachbuilders were involved in constructing cabs and bodies on the big Snorkels. This Humberside machine was completed in 1968 to the order of Lindsey County Fire Brigade and featured bodywork by HCB-Angus Ltd. (T Welham)



**Above:** Durham County Fire Brigade received this 85 ft Snorkel in 1971 and, three years later, inherited an identical one from Darlington Fire Brigade. This one had the Jennings back to back cab with rear bodywork also by Jennings.

was that it was the first fire engine to have been built in Scotland since World War II. Falkirk firm, Fulton and Wylie Ltd, built the rear bodywork on this one and several others, later going on to making a whole range of fire appliance bodies.

A total of 32 of the original pattern ERF 85ft Snorkels were sold to British fire authorities and just over 20 70 ft examples, with many others exported to the Far-East, Middle-East and Australia. Thereafter, as the Snorkel became more widely accepted, examples with lengths of up to 104 ft were introduced, by which time other chassis, including Dennis, Dodge, Ford and Shelvoke had been adapted to carry the heavier equipment.



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# KINGS OF THE ROAD - Australian Road Trains

*John Greeves looks at these giants of the Outback.*

The 1934 AEC government road train arrives in Alice Springs with a load of wool from MacDonald Downs. (National Road Transport Hall of Fame)



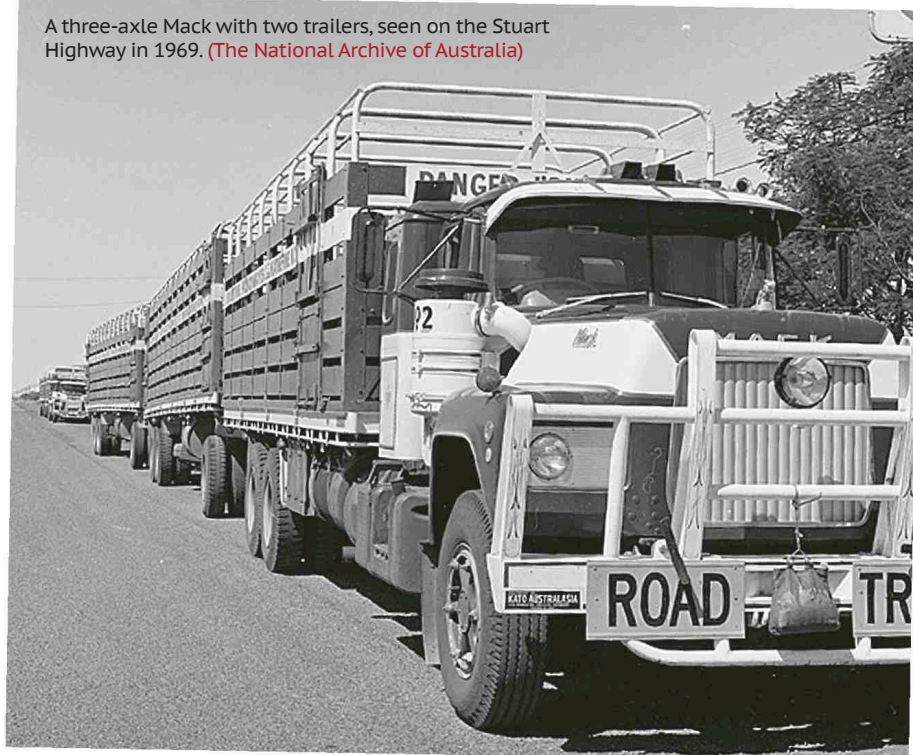
**R**oad Trains are an integral part of the Australian Outback, just like Kangaroos, red dust and endless horizons. It was the reluctance of successive Australian governments to extend rail routes into the Northern Territories that led to the development of these unique trackless multi-unit vehicles.

The licensing authorities' term for a road train is 'Multi-Combination' vehicle and they define it one as being a 'Prime Mover' or rigid body truck towing two or more trailers, two of which are greater than nine tonnes gross vehicle mass. They can be found in all parts of Australia, but the longer road trains are generally found in the Northern Territory, which consists of a vast area of northern Western Australia and Queensland's Outback regions because, in the more populated Southern and Eastern states, they are banned on most roads.

The normal road train is made up of a prime mover and three 44-foot trailers. A twin-axle turntable dolly under the front of the trailer hooks up to the back of the trailer in front of it with a ring feeder and a dolly bar. The typical load of a three trailer road train is 120 tons. Some may be bigger, being 50 metres long and weighing approximately 200 tonnes in all. Road trains hauling for mining operations, for instance, are composed of six trailers or more.

People tend to think of road trains as transporting fuel, ore or cattle, but their role extends to household freight and there's not much they couldn't truck including complete houses.

A three-axle Mack with two trailers, seen on the Stuart Highway in 1969. (The National Archive of Australia)



## The Northern Territory

The Northern Territory is a land of vast contrast and scale. Along the 1,745 kilometres highway from Kulgera to Darwin the climate, soil and vegetation vary widely from desert conditions, around the famous 'Red Centre', with a meagre rainfall of 16cm, to immense areas of spinifex and low scrub. Bores tapped into underground sources ensure the availability of water along the route, which roughly follows the original

line of the overland telegraph (20 poles to the mile).

It was along this telegraph line that pastoralists and other settlers and later vehicles followed to the far north. The terrain and climate contrast vividly over these tremendous distances. Roughly half way between Alice Springs and Darwin, there are vast grass plains, extending to the Queensland border and, to the west, the Victoria River



district, which provide good pasture for beef cattle production. In the far north, rivers are numerous and the rainfall plentiful and vegetation is lush and taller, as the sub-tropic zone unfolds. Settlement has remained very sparse in these remote and hostile areas for many years.

### The First Australian Road Trains

Early road trains consisted of a steam traction engine pulling multiple wagons, which were first operated in the 1860s, by the Yudnamutana Mining Company. These early road trains carried stores in six wagons from Port Augusta to the mines. In 1912, John Napier imported a Daimler-Renard road train, complete with driver, to cart stores to the mines and return with copper ores.

The unique feature of the Napier road train was that each trailer had its own drive wheels. These were driven by a prop shaft from the prime mover, connected via universal joints, to the first trailer's drive axle and so on. Eventually, its 8 mph top speed proved unacceptable and it was nudged off the road by other vehicles which had benefited from the technology of World War.

Other developments followed. W A Muller, a German Major, designed and built a train consisting of an engine car and ten wagons. Powered by two Austro-Daimler six cylinder petrol engines of 125 hp each, the train also incorporated a unique system of powering



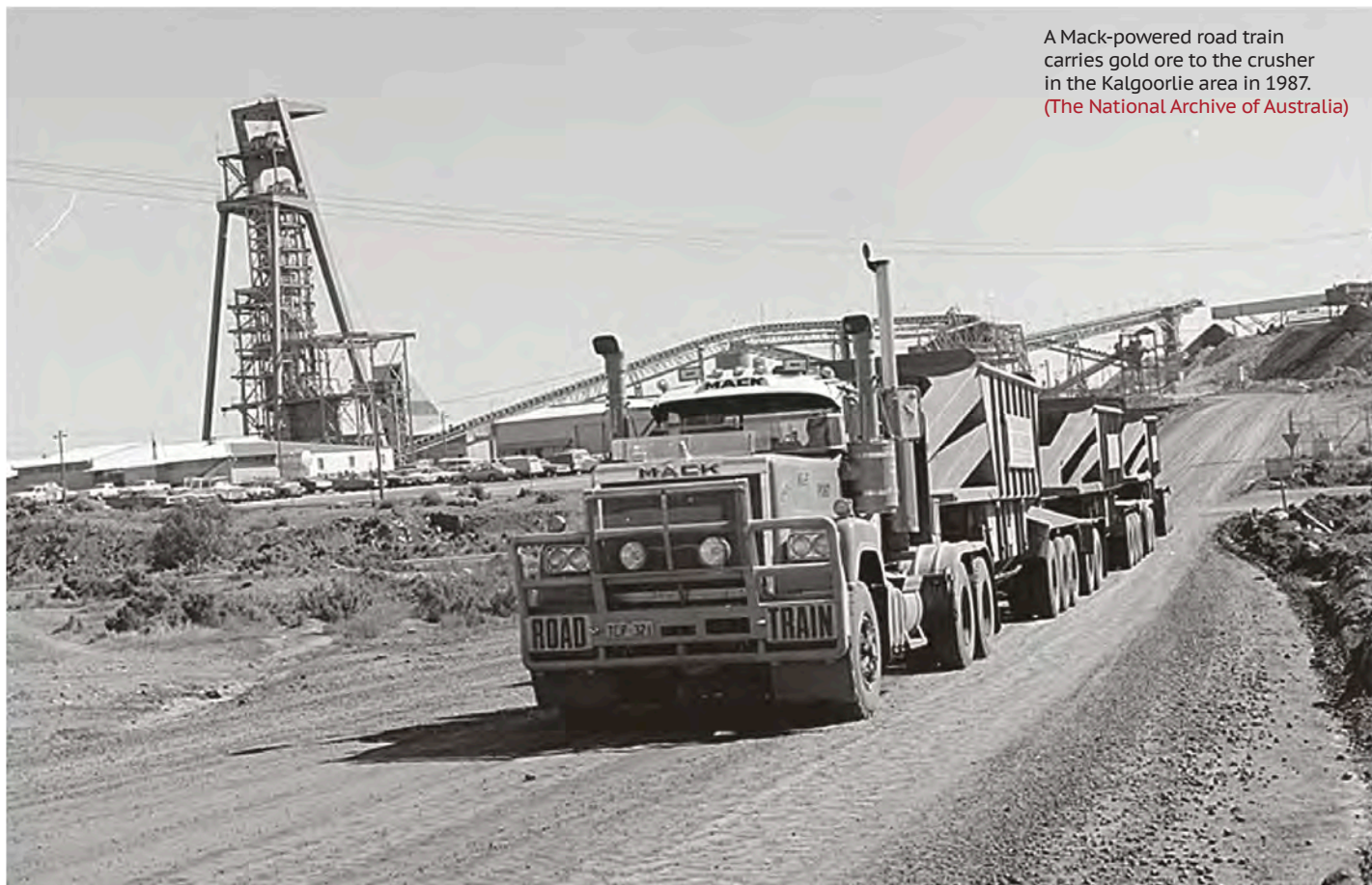
A Mack tractor unit with two Shell tanker trailers on Stuart Highway in 1970. (The National Archive of Australia)

each trailer with an electric motor, with power provided by a large dynamo in the prime mover. Unfortunately, before all tests had been completed World War I broke out and the venture was abandoned when Major Muller fled the country. His two assistants were not so lucky and were taken prisoner for the remainder of the war.

Another early entrant into this type of transport was the Caldwell-Vale. Between 1910 and 1914, approximately 40 prime movers were built by this Motor and Transport

Construction Company of Auburn, New South Wales. They were used by a number of mining companies and for hauling wool. Power came from an 80 hp engine which consumed fuel at the rate of one mile to the galleon. A three-speed gearbox allowed it to travel at a maximum of 6mph, while hauling a load of 40 tonnes on each of its trailers and on its 'tray' (the Australian term for a platform body).

The Holt Manufacture Co of Stockton, California – which was to become the famous forerunner of the Caterpillar Tractor Co –



A Mack-powered road train carries gold ore to the crusher in the Kalgoorlie area in 1987. (The National Archive of Australia)



introduced the Holt 75 in 1913, with thousands produced until 1924. This had tracked wheels at the rear and a single wheel at the front and was powered by a four cylinder overhead-valve engine that produced 75 bhp, with an average speed of 22 miles per day. Although powerful, many of these early road trains still experienced difficulties in handling quagmires and sandy conditions.

In 1914, Frank Botterill designed a large prime mover tractor, in conjunction with A H McDonald, to haul trailers carrying wool and wheat in country areas. Botterill's 'Dreadnoughts' had a series of flat bearers attached to the wheels so that, as the wheel turned, each bearer became a flat bed which prevented the wheel from sinking. These 'pedrails' were successful and the machine became known as 'Big Lizzie'. She was 34 ft long, 11 ft wide and 18 ft high, and could haul two 32 ft trailers, which each carried 35 tonnes. She carried 9,000 litres of fuel and 1,300 litres of water on both the prime mover and the trailers.

### The Government Road Train

The predecessors of the modern road trains took shape back in the 1930s, when the South Australian government began using military trucks to ship supplies to the Northern Territories. During this period, the Department of the Interior, a Commonwealth Government department, operated an AEC 8x8 military truck, to transport freight and supplies into the Northern Territory. It had been trialed in South Australia before being introduced in the Northern Territory and gradually replaced the Afghan camel trains that had been trekking through the deserts since the late 19th century.

This truck pulled two Dyson four-axle self-tracking trailers. Later two additional trailers were built in Australia. The 130 hp AEC diesel engine was similar to the standard production

The AEC Government road train seen when new in 1934. (National Road Transport Hall of Fame)



Above and below: The AEC has now been restored and is now owned by the Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. (National Road Transport Hall of Fame)



unit then being fitted to London buses and was grossly under-powered by today's standards. The clutch, main gearbox, axle and the wheels were, with slight modifications, standard AEC products. The front and rear axles were constructed with steering mechanisms but did not have any brakes, unlike the two central axles, which were fitted with brakes.

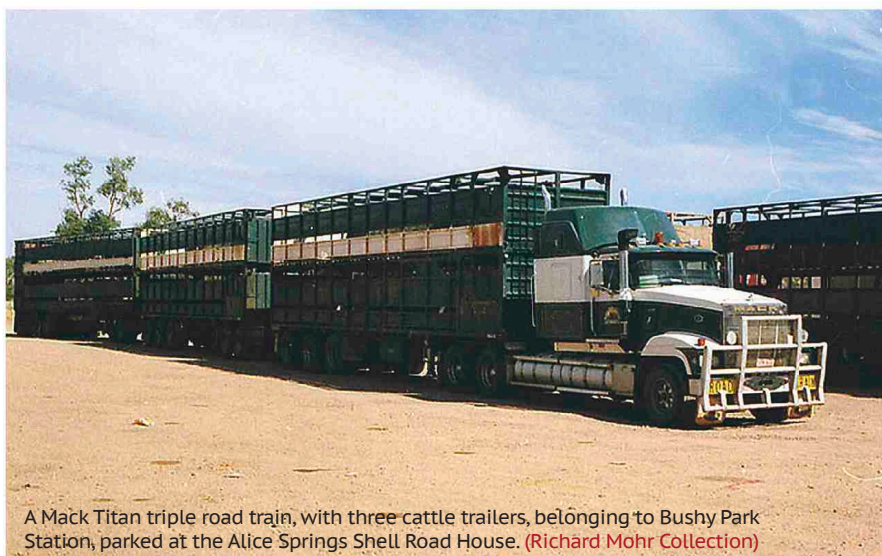
The radiator was mounted high up at the rear of the cab, to reduce as far as possible the intake on grass seeds, insects and bush debris. In front a large fan driven by a belt drove the air compressor for the brake system and supposedly provided a cooling draught in the cab. Drivers differed in their viewpoint claiming the truck's open design left them sweltering in summer and frozen in winter. There was no windscreen.



Ewan Clough was one of the first drivers. His first trip in 1934 of 287 miles took him three weeks. Often river banks were cut away, where crossings were supposed to be, or the track had disappeared in the wet and new crossing points had to be made. In boggy country, the trailers had to be disconnected and planks placed under the wheels. The vehicle was a poor starter in the winter. Clough would make sure to park his road train on an incline at night and, after cooking, he would shovel the coals under the engine. Then he would drain the radiator of water, which he would then re-boil over an open fire the next morning. With the radiator refilled, he was ready to depart.

Fencing wire and pickets, fuel, food and general supplies were carried to the remote stations and sparsely populated settlements and drivers had to be careful not to over-rev when going downhill and preventing a con rod smashing its way through the crankcase. Most of the loading would be done by the driver and for pay they received £15 a week.

The biggest load ever carried by this AEC road train was two railway carriages weighing 45 tons from Alice Spring to Larrimah for use by the Red Cross following the bombing of Darwin by the Japanese.



A Mack Titan triple road train, with three cattle trailers, belonging to Bushy Park Station, parked at the Alice Springs Shell Road House. (Richard Mohr Collection)

### AEC Road-Train 8x8 truck

Width 2.3 metres; wheelbase 4.27 m (14 ft); track 1.8m approx'; turning radius 9 m; weight 8,000kg (unladen); engine AEC 6-cyl diesel, 8.85-litres, 97kW (130hp), bore 115mm, stroke 142mm transmission four-speed manual, with three-speed transfer case, steering axles 1 and 4, steer in opposite directions, suspension live axles, leaf springs, brakes biased to act on rear trailer strongly, tractor less (axles 2 and 3 only) tyres 10.5x20.

### Pioneer of the Modern Cattle Road Train.

In terms of exploits, Crocodile Dundee seems like a girl guide, when compared with the antics of Kurt Johannsen. A true son of the inferno 'Red Centre', he was born at Deep Well, south of Alice Springs in 1915. He dropped out of school at eleven, but seemed

to be able to turn his hand to anything. His career encompasses that of labourer, fencing contractor, mailman, aviator, inventor and engineer.

On one occasion, his plane carrying passengers crashed damaging the propeller. They were in a desolate place and he set up a condenser system to de-salinate the water from a nearby lake, then he set to work to reshape the broken ends of the propeller with a small axe and eventually got the plane airborne.

His greatest innovation was his adaptation of the self-tracking trailer and development of the world's first commercial road train cattle haulage. From an army disposal sale, he was able to purchase 23 Bren-gun carriers and two Diamond T980 (ex-US Army issue) prime movers. Next, he constructed his own welding plant and built a mobile crane to transport and cart the equipment he had bought. He

The old and the new, cattle are herded from horseback and helicopter.





lengthened the chassis of the truck and fitted it with a crated end, then built his own effective self-tracking trailers, from cannibalised parts from the Bren-gun carriers. Self-tracking meant the trailers would follow exactly in the tracks of the prime-mover. With a prime mover and a string of three trailers, 54 metres long, it was possible to drive at speeds of 25 miles an hour. His first shipment of 100 cattle using his new road train took place in 1946.

Gradually, the fleet increased to three prime movers and nine trailers, capable of transporting 300 head of grown cattle at a time, over narrow, unmade, windy sandy bush tracks. The trailers could also be converted to flat tops, capable of carrying ordinary freight. The day of the cameleers and stock droving was finally over and now ranchers were able to reduce droving losses and ship cattle in their second year to market. Kurt's trailers were to travel 2,000,000 miles before they finally retired.

In 2005, 'Bertha', as Kurt Johannsen named his Diamond T road train, was restored by members of The National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs.

## Rocking and Rolling along the Highway.

The post-war period in the 1950s and 1960s, saw a dramatic development of road train operators, as hauliers abandoned the ex-military vehicles for modern British and American marques, such as Leylands and Fodens in the 1950s, and the Macks and Kenworths in the 1960s. The only two Rotinoff Viscounts were purpose built for Vestey in 1957.

Driving in the 1950s was no easy task, when the driver had to be his own mentor, mechanic, loader, unloader, clerk and navigator, often in arid conditions, and miles from anywhere with summer temperatures reaching 40°C. Water was the number one priority and tools came second.

It was perhaps Fodens that made the biggest impression in the Northern Territory in the 1950s and '60s, but this dominance gradually gave way to the more versatile Macks and



This Freightliner with 'triples' with three containers of general freight is seen taking a break at Daley Waters roadhouse on the Stuart highway between Darwin and Alice Springs. (Richard Mohr Collection)



'Bertha', Kurt Johannsen's Diamond T in service with three trailers loaded high with drums. (National Road Transport Hall of Fame)

Internationals, which were gaining ever wider acceptance by operators. By the 1970s, Mack had gained ascendancy in the road train scene, with White, White Autocar and Kenworth also winning acceptance from the Australian scene. British marques were falling behind and unable to keep pace with the power race, as the British motor industry slipped into decline.

Today, most of the road-trains have three 44-foot trailers and travel between 60 and 65 miles an hour and have full air brakes. Macks and

Kenworths are commonplace and have been built to precise road train specifications. They run 450 to 500 horse power engines and have a minimum of a 13-speed gear box. Chassis are stronger, with more cross members. The trucks are equipped with air tanks for tyre inflation and extra fuel tanks, to travel over 1000 miles with roadhouses (truck stops) being often 200 miles apart. Usually a company assigns two drivers to one prime mover, allowing one to drive and one to rest. Most drivers are on the road for two weeks, before they take a week off.

## End of the Road

What happens when vehicles reach the end of the road? If it's in Australia, they're sent to the National Road Transport Hall of Fame in Alice Springs. Situated on the same site is The Old Ghan Train Railway Museum (1). Thanks to the founders, Liz Martin and Judy Robinson and a band of dedicated volunteers, many of the vehicles representing Australia's trucking industry have been saved from rusting away on cattle stations or broken up for scrap.



Above and top of next page: Kurt Johannsen's Bertha Diamond was an ex-military vehicle, operated by Kurt Johannsen, who was one of the road train pioneers that opened up the interior of Australia. This vehicle is also fully restored and in working order at the museum at Alice Springs. (Richard Mohr Collection)





Opened in 1995, the museum is dedicated to the preservation of Australia's unique road transport heritage and portrays the history of Australia, both through its trucks, and the personal life and hardship of larger than life individuals, who played their part in the development of modern Australia. The museum has over 300 vehicles on site, both on display and in storage including the classic AEC government road train and Kurt Johannsen's unique road train 'Bertha', as well as individually-donated vehicles and a number of prominent trucking company sponsored displays. You can easily spend hours learning about the camel strings of old,, through to today's modern road trains and the history of stretchliner coaches.

Some of the longest ever road trains are pictured in one of the museum's rooms. A road train in 1999 held the record for the World's Longest Road Train, having 45 trailers, and was powered by a Kenworth K1000G HP with Cummins motor and was 610 metres long. Another road train shown had 79 trailers, weighed 1,072 tonne and was 1,018 metres

long, powered by a Kenworth C501T with 600 HP Cummins motor. A road train working at Granites mine in the Tanami weighed 400 tonne.

If this wasn't enough, 2,452 cattle were taken by road from the cattle station at Helen Springs to Darwin, using seventeen triple trains. Nothing, it seems is impossible in Australia, however big, when it comes down to road trains and the 'truckies' who drive these amazing kings of the road.

■ **More road trains next month**



**Above:** A view of the luxurious driver's cab of the 1934 AEC, also seen at a rally at Warrangul. This is the only one of 3 ever produced. One went to Russia, one to South Africa and this vehicle. The 1934 eight wheel drive AEC towed three self-tracking trailers. It has now been restored to working order at the National Road Transport Hall of Fame at Alice Springs. (Richard Mohr Collection)

#### FOOTNOTE:

(1) Great Northern Railway- 'The Ghan.'

Work began on the Great Northern Railway in 1878, to link Port Augusta with Darwin and open up central Australia. The southern section of the line reached Alice Springs in 1929, and the train running this line became known as 'The Ghan', named after the Afghan camel drivers, who had contributed to the development of communication and transport links in inland Australia.

#### CARRIAGES USED OR ON DISPLAY AT OLD GHAN

- The real deal - Old Ghan NSU 58 diesel electric locomotive Rumbalara - first class narrow gauge (3ft 6ins)
- Dining Car - built 1940, the second of two built for The Ghan
- Maree - converted workman's accommodation unit. Used at Maree as a carpenter's workshop for 15 years
- Flat Top Units - a variety
- First Class Sleeping Car
- Second Class Sleeping Car
- Dining Car with original galley
- Ex-Transcontinental Cars - converted to narrow gauge in 1955, for use on The Ghan

#### LINKS

**National Road Transport Hall of Fame**

**Location:** Norris Bell Ave (about 5km south of town) – they are open even days a week.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

[www.roadtransporthall.com](http://www.roadtransporthall.com)

**Dave's Travel Corner:**

[www.davestravelcorner.com](http://www.davestravelcorner.com)

**Tourism NT:**

[www.australiasoutback.com](http://www.australiasoutback.com)

**State Library of South Australia:**

[www.slsa.sa.gov.au](http://www.slsa.sa.gov.au)

**Richard Mohr Collection:**

[www.hankstruckpictures.com/mohr4.htm](http://www.hankstruckpictures.com/mohr4.htm)

**The National Archive of Australia:**

[www.naa.gov.au/about-us/](http://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/)

**Northern Territory Library:**

<http://www.ntl.nt.gov.au>



# Bedfords in New Zealand

*John Raggett has sent us an interesting selection of pictures of Bedford vehicles seen on a recent trip to New Zealand.*



A couple of years ago we published some pictures in Vintage Roadscene that John had taken on a trip to New Zealand. He has recently returned from another trip and thought we might be interested in some more...

They used to say about Bedfords that 'you see them everywhere' and you still can in New Zealand. One thing that struck John while he was there was the number of old lorries, especially Bedfords, abandoned on farms and sheep stations all over the country, almost as if their owners were reluctant to see them go. (Old Bedfords never die, they slowly rot away?)

They are normally too far away to get meaningful photos, but the TK (1) in a field north of Rotorua was close enough to the road to be able to get a picture. Also parked in the open was a TK Luton (2) outside the Wanaka Toy and Transport Museum.

A visit to the Hobbiton movie set north of Rotorua revealed some out of service







3



4



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6

Bedfords, owned by Rings Scenic Tours Ltd, including an SB bus with Emslie Consolidated Industries Ltd body (3) and a Hawke bodied 45-seater VAM parked alongside another SB with a NZ Motor Bodies 40-seat coach body (4).

Another use for old lorries is conversion to mobile homes, such as the J-type (5) seen in Abel Tasman National Park. It's not just Bedfords that get abandoned rather than scrapped. The Ford D Series with a reefer body (6) was in a field beside Highway 1 and the selection of Morris Minors (7) were seen grazing near Lake Manapouri.



7



8







There are a number of old Bedfords to be found at the Wanaka museum (8), including an MK, TKs and an S Type, along with a number of other vehicles, but left outside in all weathers, I doubt if these are much better off than those abandoned in fields.

Some survivors included a Bedford K Type (9) parked outside the Bedford Bar pub at Richmond, south of Nelson. It was licensed for use up until 28th October 2014

and is presumably used for promotional work. Another similar vehicle nearly was ignominiously parked on top of a pile of bricks.

I was heading out of town on the long trip to Fox Glacier when I saw these. Had I known about this place, I would have dropped in for a beer the previous evening to see what, if any, memorabilia relating to Bedfords might be found inside.

The 1939 Bedford (10), this time an M Type, with a locally-built cab, is one of several to be found at the Founders Museum in Nelson and seen near Wellington, another beautifully restored M Type (11), of which the owner was happy for me to take a picture. How small it looks parked alongside a modern day prime mover.

Remarkably, I came across several different Bedfords still earning their keep, including a









J Type recovery vehicle (12) seen in Picton, an SB3 bus (13) seen parked at Fox Glacier in pouring rain and a TK-based fire engine (14) at Doubtful Sound, which probably owes its survival due to its remoteness, Doubtful Sound having no road access to the outside world.

Cadbury World in Dunedin still uses a Bedford CA van (15) for 'emergency' deliveries of coffee and the J Type platform lorry (16) is still in use delivering timber around Christchurch. I first spotted it loaded with sawn timber, but I didn't have my camera on me. It is seen after having made its delivery.

John says, aside from Bedfords, he has a few more pictures of other vintage British vehicles in New Zealand. However, for the time being, one more Bedford is a 1956 'Green Goddess', seen in the fire engine hall at the Wanaka museum. This was one of 42 purchased in 1975-76 from the UK, after they became surplus to requirements. Most of them, including the one shown (17), entered service with the New Zealand Fire Service, but some were used by the VRFF, which John thinks stands for Volunteer Reserve Fire Fighters.







# An Aussie Rally

*Graeme Oliver* has sent some pictures of a vehicle rally in Australia, which show both similarities and differences, when compared with similar events in Britain.



**Above:** This AEC Matador was built in 1951, one of five for Sydney City Council, and used as a road flushing truck. It was later used to 'tow a float with a Case drott' on the back. It is fitted with a 7.7 litre six cylinder diesel engine, five-speed gearbox and a Hastings-Deering colonial design cab, and took seven years to rebuild. Of note is the 'Old Historic' registration plate.

**G**raeme drives a milk tanker in Victoria, and supplied us with some interesting pictures of milk transport past and present in that Australian state (Vintage Roadscene issue 179, October 2014). Now he has followed this up with some pictures taken at a vintage vehicle rally at Cleveland, an outer suburb of Brisbane in the state of Queensland.

There are plenty of British-built lorries to be seen, as well as some American and European vehicles and the Aussies certainly seem to like their old vehicles, with plenty of people looking at the wide range on display.

The pictures were taken a few years back, in May 2007, and it's interesting to note that this is the equivalent of our November, but everybody is in shirt-sleeves, enjoying the sunshine, as well as the old vehicles. Makes you a little bit jealous, doesn't it...



**Above:** Seen parading around a circuit on the rally site is a beautifully-restored Commer QX from the late 1950s, with the last style of BSP cab, with a cattle body.





1: A couple of Mack B61 six-wheeled tractor units from the 1960s in the parade, followed by an early Albion. There were plenty of Macks of different types at this rally, proving their popularity around the world. 2: A well-preserved early post-war Albion Chieftain with a platform body – usually known as a ‘tray’ in Australia – taking part in the parade. 3: What at first sight looks like a pre-war Fordson actually sports the Chevrolet ‘Bow-tie’ badge at the top of its shield-shaped radiator grille. 4: Apparently this was one of the first two Mack H673ST COE (cab over engine) models in Australia in 1962, known as ‘Cherry-pickers’ because of their high cabs. After use over high mileages between Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney, it moved to Brisbane and was converted to right hand drive to transport earth-moving machinery, until retired in the 1980s and since restored. 5: The European manufacturers were already moving into the Australian market in the 1960s, as shown by this Mercedes-Benz L1418 tractor unit.



1



1: What looks like a 1920s Thornycroft, updated with pneumatic tyres and electric lighting, but still with its very open cab, one of several vehicles at the rally belonging to an earth-moving company.

2: Another splendidly-restored Mack B61, this time a four-wheeled tractor unit.

3: A Canadian-style Ford from the 1940s, with a flat 'tray' body.

4: An international Harvester Autowagon 'High-wheeler' dating back to pre-World War I days. No corks on his hat, but the driver looks the part.

4: This Mack B61 prime mover was displayed with a 'stock trailer'. With its massive 'roo-bars', air-cleaners and exhausts, it is similar to vehicles used to pull road trains.

2



3



4



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**Above:** A Scammell Scarab owned by a local operator stands next to an Austin 'Loadstar'-based fire engine.

**Right:** It looks as if this Morris-Commercial One-Tonner has had a replacement 'Morris' radiator, unless these vehicles for Australia went by that name, but it's still a great survivor from around 85 years ago.

**Bottom right:** Another very early vehicle is this solid-tyred Leyland, which has been beautifully restored to its original condition.

**Below:** With that early Albion getting in on the act again, this Mack six-wheeler is probably an ex-military vehicle, which has retained its open cab while used with a bogie and bolsters for timber haulage.







**Above:** Here are two restoration projects, a Leyland Hippo and a Thornycroft tipper, with the glass-fibre panelled cab from the turn of the 1960s – and that looks like a 'Regal' badge on the grille of the locally-bodied front-engined single-decker...



**Left:** Another project is this Austrian-built Saurer diesel, dating from 1963, according to the maker's plate. This must have been quite an unusual vehicle to find in use in Australia.



**Above:** A rather flamboyantly-restored International lorry from the late 1950s, which could be mistaken for a Commer Superpoise at first glance, next to a later Commer Maxiload.



**Above:** A nice-looking 1920s Dennis which, like so many of the vehicles at the Cleveland rally, wouldn't look out of place at a similar event in the UK.





1: Something completely different and foreign to our eyes is this forward control Scania-Vabis. 2: Said on the notice to be the family's trusty farm truck, this Bedford M Type is fitted with the subtly different locally-built cab used on many of these vehicles in the Antipodes. 3: In a bid to make up for my faux-pas in identifying a Napier seen at the Great Dorset rally last year as a Karrier, here is another of these rare beasts, beautifully restored on the other side of the world. 4: Next to the Napier we find this rather splendid van-bodied 1920s Mack, contrasting with the more recent B61 on the other side. 5: This 1960s Commer Maxiload tractor unit either has raised suspension or the cab is fitted higher than usual to clear a bigger engine, suggested by the substantial 'roo-bar' and the low-loader trailer. 6: An International ACCO (Australian Constructed Cab Over) from the late 1960s, similar to one we saw fitted with a milk tank in issue 179. There are lots more pictures of different interesting vehicles at the Cleveland rally which have been sent by Graeme. We can re-visit in a future issue if readers would like this...





# Caught in Time - On Location

**Allan Bedford** has brought back some interesting views of lorries among his holiday snaps and shares them with us here.

**H**ow many times do we see interesting vehicles when we are on holiday and have the presence of mind to photograph them? It is all too easy to think: "Oh, I'll catch that one next time," and, of course, it's gone! Malta in particular has been a great place to see old British lorries still at work in recent years, but it's still a matter of catching them before they all disappear.

There are also a few foreigners mixed in, for a little balance, but these are old British vehicles which are rarely seen these days, other than on a rally field. So, continuing with 'British lorries abroad', which seems to be the theme of this issue, here are some lovely old lorries still earning a living, far away in the sun...



**Top:** Here is a real classic, which would make a great preservation prospect, a rare Bedford 'D' Type, from around 1958, seen in Bugiba, Malta in November 1997, registered JAP 872, carrying a load of concrete reinforcing rods at yet another 'job in progress'.

**Above:** On a short Mediterranean cruise in June 2000, Allan's wife opted for one of the excursions offered, while he headed for the Gozo ferry terminal in Valetta. These two Ergomatic-cabbed eight-wheelers were parked on the quay, showing off early and late-style grilles, plus a local style of front bumper, some fine lining on the paintwork and a rather bald tyre on the one in front. Meanwhile, as if by magic, the ferry sailed into view, as can be seen...





**Top left:** Back in 1997, on the way back from Victoria to the ferry terminal on Gozo, this well-preserved AEC-badged Ergo-cabbed tractor unit was encountered, with a low-loader trailer, with totally unprotected four-in-line wheels.

**Top right:** Also in 1997, this Foden S80, LAR 556, was another gem seen on the way back to the ferry from the capital of Gozo, Victoria. Complete with a blown exhaust roaring away, it crept past Allan, with the driver waving; they could have had a chat, such was its rate of progress.

**Right:** At the other end of the weight scale, the Ford 'A' Series was never very popular in Britain, but seems to have gone down well in Malta, as shown by this well-used example, EBA 262, one of several seen, departing from Mgarr Ferry Terminal in Gozo, in November 1997.



First down the ramp of the Gozo ferry was this well-loaded Bedford KM, EAW 764, followed by a hold-full of other British-built heavy goods vehicles.





**Right:** A nice early example of a Thames Trader, in excellent condition, CBD 682, seen in Rabat, Victoria, in 1997. This would make another fine preservation prospect.

**Below:** Another Ford, a 'D' Series with the late-style grille, KAL 341, parked at the port of Cirkewwa, Malta, with a slightly questionable load of mixed timber on its platform body behind the Hiab lorry loading crane, also in 1997.



**Above:** In '7-Up' livery, this Bedford TL, EAZ 772, with a very traditional-style dray body – just as they used to be – was parked at the Mgarr terminal, Gozo, in 1997, looking 'nearly new'.



**Above:** 'Madame Butterfly' doesn't seem a particularly appropriate name for this Dodge 500 Series belonging to a building contractor. JAL 412 was seen parked in Bugibba, Malta, in 1997, showing how the kinder climate had spared the cab the sort of terminal rusting suffered by most examples in the UK.





**Top:** Allan says this 'magnificent' Fiat 691, with an interesting four-axle wheel arrangement, was photographed from his hotel balcony in the ferry port of Cirkewwa in 1997. It looks as if it still had its old Italian registration and he believes it was carrying cement from Gozo. It is passing a Ford Transit minibus, which was still smart at what must have been nearly 20 years old at the time.

**Right:** The only Guy 'Big J' which Allan saw during his short stay in 1997 was this recovery vehicle, LAN 474, parked outside Peter's Garage in Valetta.



**Bottom right:** On a day in Gibraltar in February 2000, with the usual tour of attractions, a solitary Shelvoke & Drewry was seen en route, but all was redeemed, says Allan, when these ex-military Leyland six-wheeled refuellers were seen parked close to their cruise ship, with the Rock see towering behind.

**Below:** This Bedford TJ was seen during a week on the 'wonderful island of Madeira' in 1992, where many of these evergreen perennials were an everyday sight. This made a lovely picture, clearing up after market day, loaded with lots of local basket-ware, but would it all still be there when he got home?







**Above:** An early morning scene, on arrival at Funchal Harbour, Madeira, in April 1974, with an early post-war Bedford OL and a Chevrolet from around 1937 ready to unload boxes of fruit at the harbour.

**Left:** On the same Fred Olsen cruise, Allan docked at Gran Canaria, again in the early morning, where this late pre-war/early post-war Kew Dodge was seen. Behind, a 1970s fiat pushed through the gap between the Dodge and a Commer Maxiloader.

**Right:** This now classic Pegaso (12177) skip loader was seen from an open-top bus tour, during a short stay in Barcelona in 2000, apparently delivering a very full load of sand.

**Bottom right:** A Dennis-Carmichael Sabre fire appliance, with a generally British look, seen in Hong Kong in 2007, during a stop-over on the way to New Zealand. Evidence of the former British presence could still be seen with the large number of Dennis and Leyland-based double-decker buses, but apart from this, the only other British-built HGV was a Seddon-Atkins refuse vehicle.

**Below:** Also in Barcelona in 2000 was this Sava Model 213, a make not seen in the UK, but built by the Pegaso-Enasa Group. Sava had previously built BMC J4s, FGs and other models in large numbers. Estrella Damm is the local pilsner, first brewed in the city in 1876.







**Above:** Typical of the lorries seen in Hong Kong in 2007 was this Hino eight-wheeler, with a Palfinger lorry loader. The colony still uses rather British-looking registration plates.



**1:** Moving on to New Zealand in October 2007, this Foden Alpha eight-wheeler and draw-bar trailer, typical of the local heavyweight vehicles, was parked up where Allan and his wife enjoyed a morning coffee break, at Murchison, South Island.

**2:** Another typical Hong Kong heavy lorry, similar to the Hino, but on a Mitsubishi chassis. (The editor had a photographic spree in Hong Kong at around the same time, so we could bring you more shots like this...)

**3:** Also seen during this coffee break was this 1965-6 Ford Transit, with the original style of light clusters. The owner was happy to chat and claimed its longevity was mainly down to his liberal application of old fish oil to the underside each year...

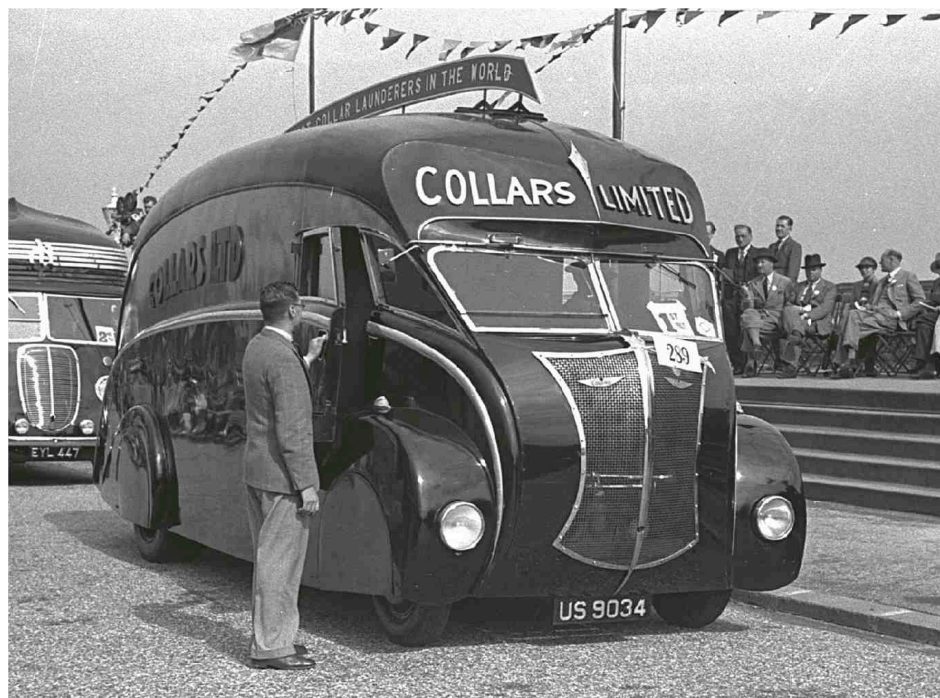
**4:** Not a particularly old vehicle, but this American Freightliner and low-loader are demonstrating house removal, New Zealand-style, in Blenheim, South Island



# A TRIUMPH IN CONCRETE

Coinciding with the news that Birmingham Council has sold-off the NEC to a venture capital arm of Lloyds Bank, after a rear-guard battle by conservationists, the owners of Earls Court are to press ahead with the demolition what was, for nearly 50 years, Britain's original 'national exhibition centre'. **Malcolm Bates** looks back to a time when it was an integral part of what made Britain great.

**S**omewhere in what I precociously term my 'transport archive' is a hardback book published in the late 1930s detailing, in a typically period triumphant tone, the achievements that have been made thanks to reinforced concrete. The German Autobahnen rate pretty high – although according to the book, the



nearest thing we had at the time – the Guildford Bypass – blotted it's copybook by featuring really tight turns and an especially badly-designed junction between the Bypass and the A25 Hogs Back.

There were other notable achievements however, like the Silvertown Way flyover to relieve congestion from traffic leaving the docks and heading for the Woolwich Ferry. This was achieved by raising the road over several railway level crossings, although it also came at the cost of demolishing a large number of houses. Pity it never joined-up to any other modern 'motor road'.

The Mersey Tunnel? That was another one. And again, the use of concrete not only added to the smart appearance of the portals at each end of the tunnel, it allowed for a large diameter bore

with room to spare for a double track tramway underneath the road deck. Funny, I don't ever remember reading that Liverpool trams were planned to run under the Mersey in a subway, do you? I wonder what happened there...?

The De la Warr Pavilion at Bexhill also gets a well-deserved mention, as an example of how modern architectural design – and reinforced concrete building techniques – could revolutionise the way our civic buildings and infrastructure projects looked. Go and look at the recently-restored De la Warr Pavilion today and, apart from the astonishment that such an advanced structure could ever have been built in somewhere as conservative as Bexhill (it nearly wasn't), the thing that really hits you is how 'modern' it still seems. Even after all these years.

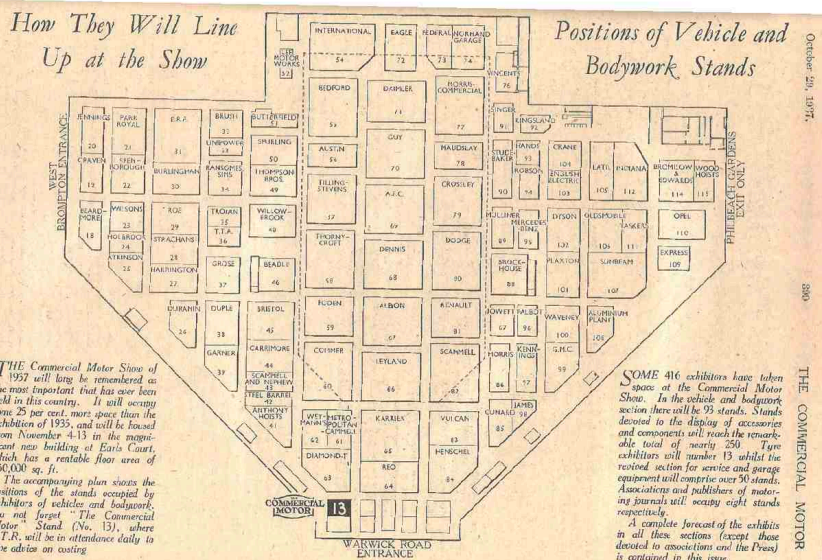
**Top:** When Earls Court was still new, 'streamlining' was all the rage in cars – so why not buses and vans too? Hard to believe, but underneath this Holland Coachcraft van was a humble Commer. (CHC aak242)

**Left:** The 1937 'Commercial Motor Show' was billed as: "The greatest road transport exhibition ever held in the UK", according to an editorial in the October 29th issue of 'The Commercial Motor'. The still very new-looking Earls Court facade naturally featured in several manufacturer's adverts, but it was Commer that bagged the front cover slot. A noticeable feature of the show was the large number of American manufacturers that displayed goods and passenger chassis, including Diamond T, GMC, International, Federal and Reo – alongside more Anglicised products from Vauxhall-Bedford, Ford and Dodge Brothers of Britain, that is. What happened to Ford? The company held an 'alternative show' of its own at the Royal Albert Hall.

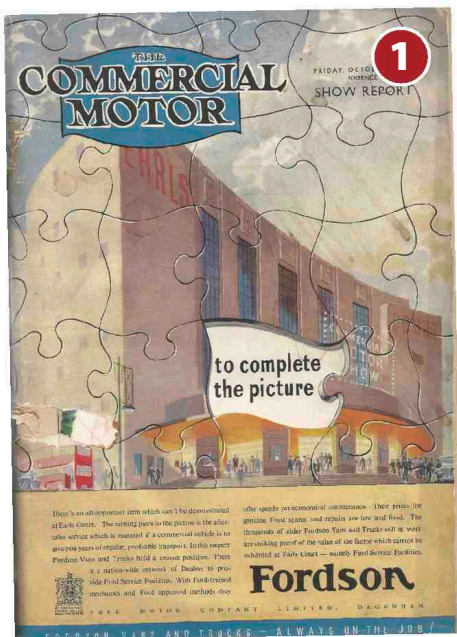




Below: The publicity department at Leyland Motors was clearly in a bit of a quandary here. It wanted to make a big splash, but had lost out on the front cover slot to Commer. Next best thing was a double page spread early on in the issue. But what to feature? And how to illustrate what the Leyland stand would look like before it had happened? The answer was to employ a 'commercial artist'. Sadly, the 'artist's impression' was reproduced in black and white. Apart from the pretty little Lynx 5-tonner, 'Twin Steers' were clearly in favour in 1937 – the front entrance 'Gnu' may well have lead to a generation of front entrance single-deckers 15 years before it actually happened had World War II not intervened.



Above: Those were the days! Here is a site plan of the 1937 CV Show. The dotted line indicates the full height of the main hall – everything else is under the balcony mezzanine. The allocations of stands is interesting – was there a stand lottery in those early days, we wonder? Surprisingly perhaps, Diamond T, Henschel and Reo all had key slots next to the Warwick Road entrance. Commer and Karrier were on different stands and the British 'heavies' like Leyland, AEC, Scammell Albion, Thornycroft and Foden were fighting for attention, in competition with the likes of Dennis, Maudslay, Guy and Tilling Stevens. Oddly, although still with a large stand, ERF was situated over near the West Brompton entrance, with bodybuilders such as fellow Sandbach residents Jennings, while Austin, Morris-Commercial, Bedford and Commer looked out for light van and mid-range customers. The star of the show? It should have been the three-axle underfloor-engined Tilling Stevens 'Successor' coach and 'Yeoman' heavy duty lorry chassis with flat-eight diesel engines, but alas, they were too much for a conservative market.



1: The war had been won and although Britain was still facing crippling austerity and rationing, the country still needed new vehicles. In this October 1st 1948 issue of 'The Commercial Motor', Ford had clearly decided to come in from the cold and exhibit alongside the rest of the industry, bagging itself a front cover ad in the process. Oddly – at least for the time – there is actually no 'product' featured on the advert. Or any Ford/Fordson logo, for that matter. The advertisement copy suggested that 'Ford Service' was the all important factor – suggesting that certain other competitors didn't have any perhaps? Star of the show? It should have been the ahead-of-it's-time tilt cab from George Neville. The first seemed to be fitted to totally rebuild ex-WD Bedfords. Note this is also an artist's

impression' of Earls Court – in real life, the building had been given a camouflage paint-job when war was declared.

2: In addition to the well-known names from the pre-war era, the first big post-war CV show featured some names then new to the world of commercial vehicles – Jensen was one of the more interesting. Although designed just before the war, the 'JNSN' used alloy monocoque construction to give a long wheelbase open-backed lorry weighing in at just 58 cwt (under 3 tons) unladen, thus qualifying for the 30 mph limit instead of 20. A Perkins diesel with five-speed 'overdrive' gearbox was standard equipment, which made the Jensen ideal for urgent loads, such as produce. At the same 1948 show, the

company also introduced the new 'Jen-Tug'. This was designed to 'replace horse traffic', we're told, and could pull a 30cwt payload trailer. This lead to the electric-powered 'Jen-Helecs' as modelled by Dinky Toys.

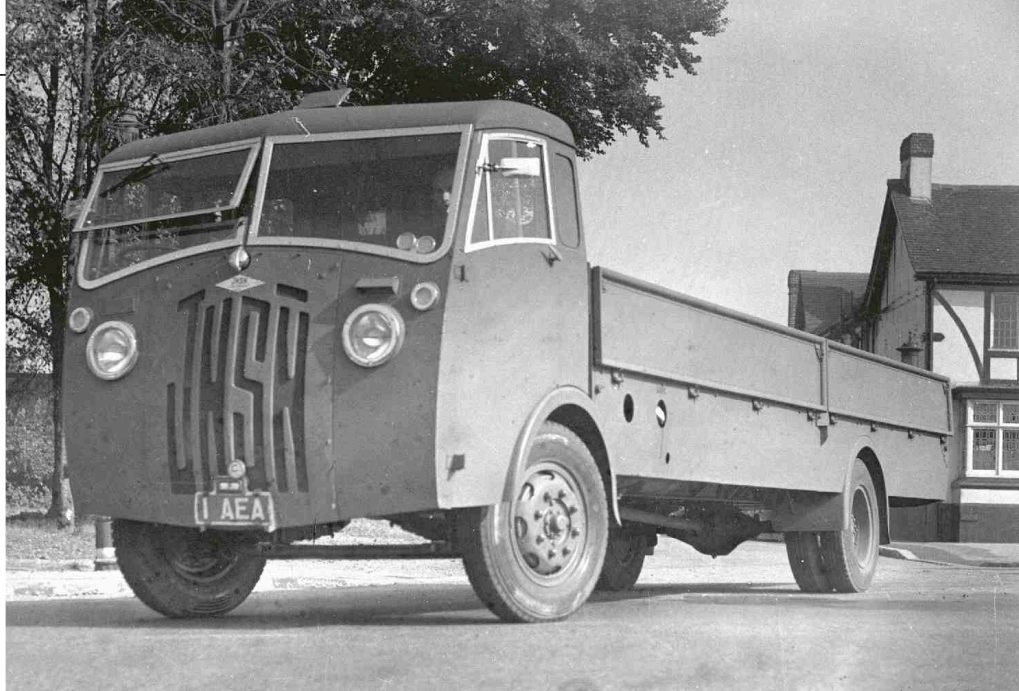
3: Another new contender for winning a slice of the early postwar commercial vehicle market was Norwich-based Proctor. Also featuring the Perkins P6 diesel engine as standard, Proctors were naturally popular in the Eastern Counties, with farmers, growers and agricultural merchants – but also won business from BRS. Like many adverts of this period, what was probably a half-finished prototype has been 'retouched' by an artist to make it more striking.



Actually, the word we need to seize on here is 'moderne'. And although it would be quite easy to fill a large book with what does – and doesn't – constitute the finer points of the term, we should be able to agree that horizontal, rather than vertical, lines and the liberal use of glass, steel and cast concrete are most likely to be the ingredients needed to achieve the desired end-result.

That takes us neatly onto the subject of Earls Court. Prior to its opening in 1936, London only had a few outdated venues available for exhibitions and trade fairs. There was The Crystal Palace. But that burnt down. There was Alexander Palace, but that was designed more as a people's pleasure park and a venue for concerts, than as a showcase for Britain's still considerable industrial muscle.

There had been major events at Wembley (the Empire Exhibition in 1926) and White City (the one-off Anglo-French event 20 years earlier), of course, but much like the 'Millennium Dome' many years later, they weren't suited for long-term



Above: Although of prewar origins, using a Ford engine, the postwar Jensen was a fast, lightweight flyer thanks to a Perkins diesel. (CHC aab417)

Below: The Jen Tug was aimed as a dray horse 'substitute'. The standard model had an Austin petrol engine, but it was the battery electric 'Jen-Helecs' that was modeled by Dinky. (CHC aab424)



## PERSONAL MEMORIES OF EARLS COURT

*Who's that kid sitting in the cab of the biggest lorries he could find at Earls Court? Who's the kid going from stand to stand, hoovering up sales brochures and packing them into carrier bags? And who's the kid who ended up working for a specialised British commercial vehicle manufacturer, designing the brochures and answering endless questions from a new generation of boy-gricers? Yes, it's our very own **Malcolm Bates**.*

If you're hoping to sample the delights of a commercial vehicle exhibition at Earls Court before the place is levelled, you're too late. Several decades too late, in fact, as the SMMT-sponsored Commercial Vehicle Exhibition moved to the newly-built National Exhibition Centre back in 1978!

Prior to that, the event was bi-annually held at Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. So 'Going up to London' on the train was something to look forward to every two years. And yes, the atmosphere really was exciting. My first 'solo' visit was as a 13 year old and yes, I still have the brochures harvested from that visit!

My memories? It's possible my memories of Earls Court have been more recently

coloured by how fresh, clean and spacious the NEC was – although it too is starting to show it's age now. After several years-worth of visits to Earls Court as an eager schoolboy, then as a design student with a reasonable excuse to be there and finally as an employee of an SMMT member company, I'd always assumed exhibition halls were supposed to be that chaotic and crowded.

But my impression soon changed when I arrived at a side door on the first day of the inaugural Motor Show event at the new National Exhibition Centre, to find a sea of humanity, worse than any crowd I ever remembered at Earls Court. In their, er, 'wisdom', the SMMT had decided to make



# Commercial Motor Transport Exhibition

EARLS COURT LONDON 1-9 OCTOBER

STAND NO. 45



7/8 TONNER

WITH UNDERSLUNG HORIZONTAL OIL ENGINE

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- Close-mesh well-constructed chassis frame.
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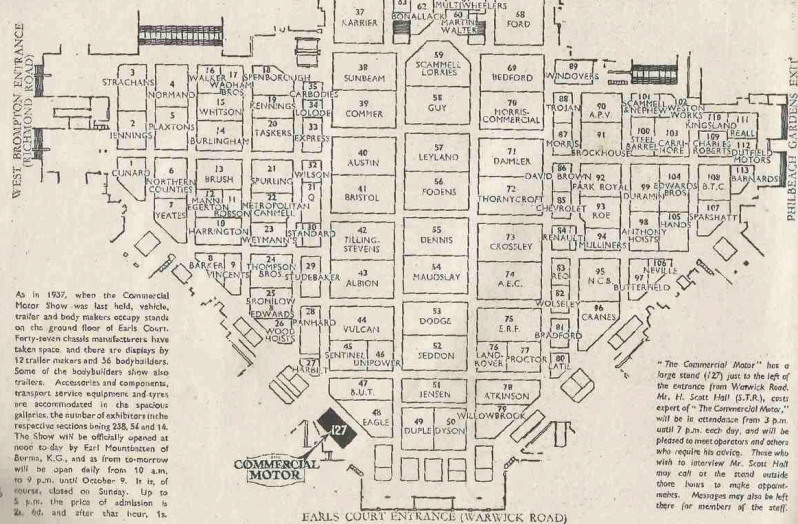
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## They Got in on the Ground Floor!



As in 1937, when the Commercial Motor Show was last held, vehicle, trailer and body makers occupy stands on the ground floor of Earls Court. Forty-seven classic manufacturers have taken space, and there are displays by 12 trailer makers and 36 bodybuilders. Some of the bodybuilders show also trailers. Accessories and components, transport service equipment and tyres are accommodated in the spacious galleries. The number of exhibitors in the respective sections being 238, 54 and 14. The Show will be officially opened at noon to-day by Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.C., and as from to-morrow will be open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. until October 9. It is of course, closed on Sunday. Up to 5 p.m. the price of admission is 2s. 6d. and after that hour, 1s.

"The Commercial Motor" has a large stand (127) just to the left of the entrance from Warwick Road. Mr. H. Scott Hall (S.F.A.), chief expert of "The Commercial Motor," will be in attendance from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. each day, and will be pleased to meet operators and others who require his advice. Those who wish to interview Mr. Scott Hall may call at the stand outside show hours to make appointments. Messages may also be left there for members of the staff.

**Above:** Here's an 'old' name in a completely new guise. Sentinel continued to produce steam lorry chassis well into the 1930s – even producing an advanced prototype using Henschel patents just prior to the war. But the purchase of the Garner brand enabled the company to keep abreast of the wider market. As a result, Sentinel was way ahead of the rest in introducing a brand new post war design – the 'under-slung horizontal oil engine'd 7/8 tonner and the 'chassis-less' Sentinel-Beadle 40 seat 'Omnibus'.

**Above right:** The war was over and it was now time to 'export or die', in order to replenish the Nation's finances. In 1948, we were told 57 different chassis manufacturers exhibited (lorries, buses and light commercials) along with 12 trailer makers and 56 bodybuilders. A quick look at the 1948 site plan shows that Tilling Stevens and Vulcan still had separate stands and that Maudslay had a more central stand than AEC. This was the show where the Scammell 'Scarab' and the Foden 'FG' were launched and where the Maudslay-Harrington horsebox in British Railways maroon was first exhibited – although such units had originally been ordered and delivered in Southern green and LNER blue livery. Was this the place where Dinky Toys 'scouts' got the information for these iconic models?

**Right:** George Neville can claim to have built the first British tilt cab lorry back in the late 1940s. So why did it take the rest so long? BMC produced the first 'all-steel' tilt cab with the FJ, but Foden can claim to be the actual first – although the Foden cab was GRP. (CHC aaw009)

**Below:** Here, AEC is using the technically-dead Maudslay brand to obtain a larger stand space, while the LAD cab on the Leyland stand was attracting plenty of attention. But the big attraction to the toy company 'scouts' has to be the Karrier stand – with the Coca-Cola 'Gamecock', the Ice Cream van on the FC van chassis and the Smiths mobile shop on a Bantam chassis all ending up as models by Corgi, or Lesney. This dramatic late 1950s shot – note the new Thames Traders – appears to be taken from well above the balcony level – but how? (CHC aar072)

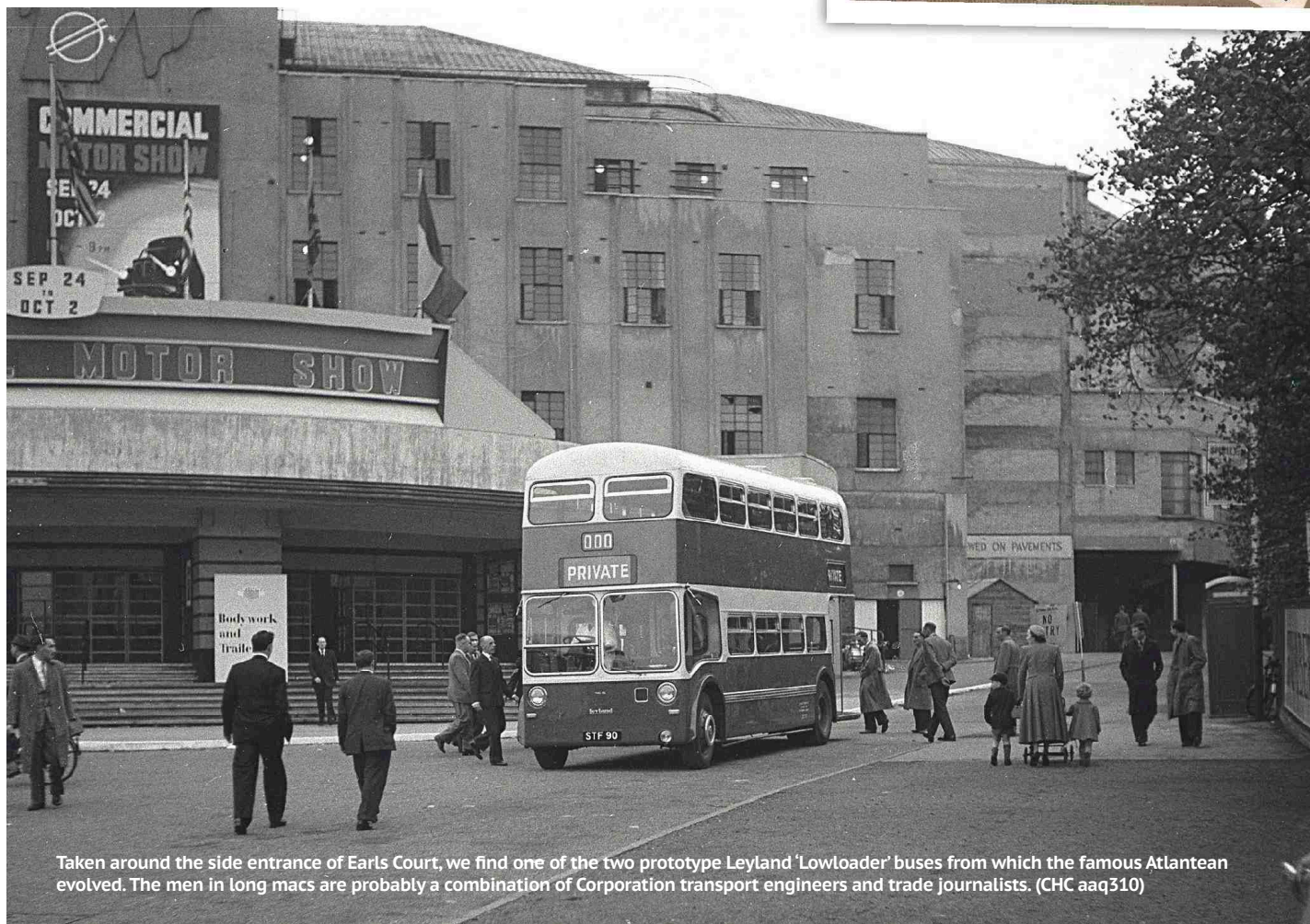






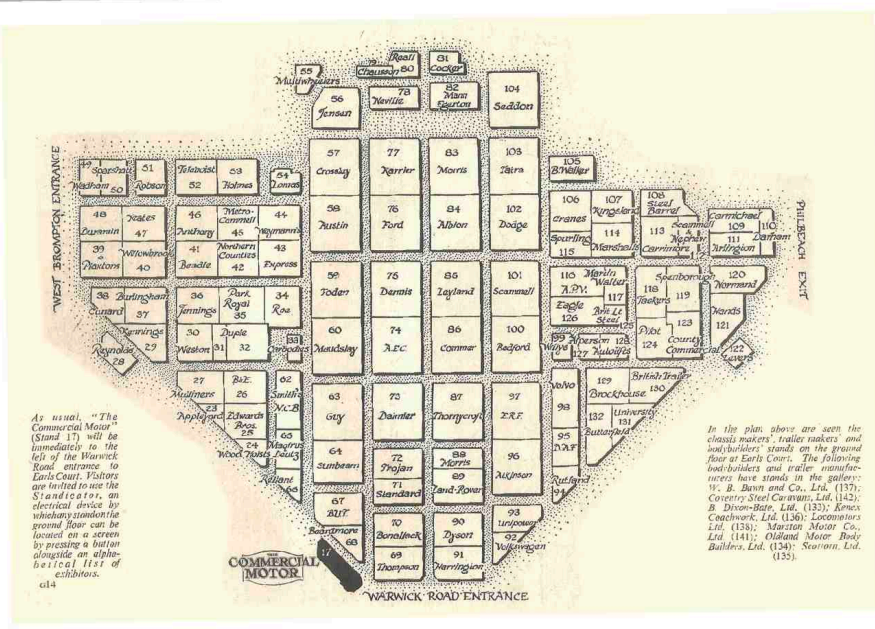
Left: Apart from Seddon and Dennis, the success of the new postwar Perkins P6 diesel engines helped the fortunes of several new manufacturers such as Rutland – and here – Proctor. The 'MkIII' number plate referred to the fact that this was built as a tractor unit – not many were. Was the cab made of the new wonder material GRP? I don't think so. (CHC aau262)

Right: It's 1956 already – arguably one of the best years for the British commercial vehicle industry, before the Suez crisis, labour relations issues and foreign competition all kicked-in. The big news? According to the Rootes Group, it's the arrival of a new range of four cylinder light diesel engines. Both Commer and Karrier ranges were at an all-time high with good export business and a strong home market demand. The 1956 CV Show featured a strong showing by Bedford with the 'S' Type – including a tractor/low loading semi-trailer on the Carrimore stand – a full range of ERFs with Gerald Broadbent-designed 'KV' cabs – both of which would feature in the Corgi and Spot-On model ranges – and that unique-to-BOAC Commer-Harrington 'Contender' airport coach modelled by Dinky. The Commercial Motor tells us the example on show featured an underfloor-mounted Rolls Royce B60 petrol engine. Another 'iconic' coach on show in 1956 was the Leyland Royal Tiger 'Worldmaster', featuring a dramatic coach body styled by Ghia and built by Autoconstruzioni Casaro – as modelled by Lesney in the 'Matchbox' series. But the real star of the show? It had to be the new Leyland 'Atlantean' rear-engined double-decker prototype. Originally displayed with a 'punt' chassis construction, it had to be made more conventional for production but, oddly, this was a design that still took a while to appear in toy model form – and even then, only in small scale.



Taken around the side entrance of Earls Court, we find one of the two prototype Leyland 'Lowloader' buses from which the famous Atlantean evolved. The men in long macs are probably a combination of Corporation transport engineers and trade journalists. (CHC aaq310)





Left: The 1956 show still featured all the major British 'wagon' makers, alongside legions of 'lightweights'. But, as this site plan illustrates, it was also the start of a new 'foreign invasion', with French manufacturer Chausson, plus Volkswagen and Magirus from Germany, together with a showing from Volvo and DAF. But the big surprise was that, even after the early post-war demand for new vehicles had been met, small UK-based manufacturers such as Rutland and Trojan were still in the frame. Beardmore – famous pre-war for making the chassis for the Multi-wheeler unit – was also at the show, but post-war, the company only competed against Austin for the London-style taxicab market. A fight it sadly lost.



Above: This show exhibit Leyland Royal Tiger 'Worldmaster' had coachwork designed by Ghia. It was dramatic enough to attract the 'scouts' from toy maker Lesney – but it wasn't the future of coach styling, at least not in the UK. (CHC aaq790)

use as a major commercial exhibition site of International status. In short, Kensington Olympia was it – but in spite of recent additions like the Empire Hall, it still wasn't big enough, nor able to handle the large crowds flocking to increasingly popular events such as the Motor Show – or the Commercial Vehicle Exhibition.

Something new was required but, as London was the centre of both the UK and the Empire, finding a suitable site in the London area must have been something of a challenge. Any new facility had to have good transport links – ideally by the Underground – and be located somewhere with hotel accommodation and 'night life'. Somewhere along the way, a triangular site bordered by railway lines, which had escaped previous development, was found in Earls Court. Unfortunately, the very reason it had escaped development, was because gaining access to the site was a major challenge. It was a challenge that concrete was to meet.

Look at it today (sadly you may already be too late to do that) and it doesn't seem that large. But in 1936, it was an impressive example of moderne design with clean lines, some stylish 'Ocean Liner' details – such as the handrails on the stairs – and above all, good connections by modern electric London Underground trains to all parts of London.

continued on page 44 ➔

## PERSONAL MEMORIES OF EARLS COURT CONTINUED

something of a splash and combine both the Motor Show and the Commercial Vehicle Exhibition at the same time. The end result? Real chaos and a massive contrast to the hushed tranquility often to be found on some of the smaller stands, tucked away under the balconies at Earls Court.

Then there was the smell. The NEC didn't smell of anything. It was new. In contrast, Earls Court had a distinct mustiness about it. Damp? Concrete dust? Human sweat? No, it was none of those things. It could have been a combination of all three perhaps, but that suggests it was unpleasant. But I'm not so sure it was. Except on a cold, damp day when

the stench from smoke from 5,000 cigarettes hung heavy in the air. Obviously, at other events such as the Smithfield Show (another of my regular pilgrimages, as I loved tractors, too), there were some distinct odours of an agricultural nature, but at the CV Show? For a start, the atmosphere was quieter than at the Motor Show – although in those pre-PC/drink-drive times, all the bars seemed to be doing a roaring trade. So yes, in some areas, there was a smell of booze. But from what I remember, the in-house catering was as unloved and expensive then, as it is at the NEC now!

While I retrospectively realised the gloss

paint, tyre black and harsh lighting from spotlights made Earls Court a real challenge for the photographer, that was no hardship, as I didn't have a camera that could take shots in such low artificial light. So the absolute high spot had to be the panoramic view that was obtainable by taking the escalator up to the first floor balcony. All the well-known lorry brands could be identified by large uniform design banners hanging from cables suspended from the roof in the main hall but, sadly, that meant that the more interesting 'newcomers' got relegated to the 'wings' under the balcony on stands on the upper level – or in the case of the





Above: The CV Show isn't all about 'wagons'; medium-weight commercials sold in far larger numbers, while the largest 'customer base' was more likely for small vans and pick-ups. For the 1956 show, the Austin brand was given far greater prominence than Morris (it was usually the other way around) and 'lightweights' got this impressive double page spread advert, while the 3 to 5 ton normal and forward control lorries had to be content with a further single page. It was clearly a 'cross-over' year for BMC. The 'old' Austin A40 was still part of the range - although the Cambridge car-styled half-ton van and pick-ups were nearly ready. The dumpy little A30 was still a youngster, but it would date far more quickly than the in-house rival Morris Minor. The 'Dynamic' Austin 'Omnivan' (not a word our Malcolm would use, having got one up on two wheels several times!) had arrived, but the larger 'LD' van still used old-fashioned coachbuilt construction.

Left: It's the start of the 'Swinging Sixties' and Ford Motor Company has made a big splash on the front cover of The Commercial Motor Technical Review. After years of decrepit pre-war designs, the new 300E vans based on the Prefect at least look modern - even if the engines are still wheezing side-valvers, but the recently introduced 15cwt 'cab-over' 400E looked - and went - light years better than the old E83W. But the big news was the Trader range. At last some style in a lorry cab. And diesel engines too! Inside that issue was proof that the scouts working for the toy makers were regular visitors to CV Shows - the amazing rear-engined eight wheeled Thompson 'Autotanker' petrol tanker - as modelled by Lesney - was unveiled at the 1960 show.

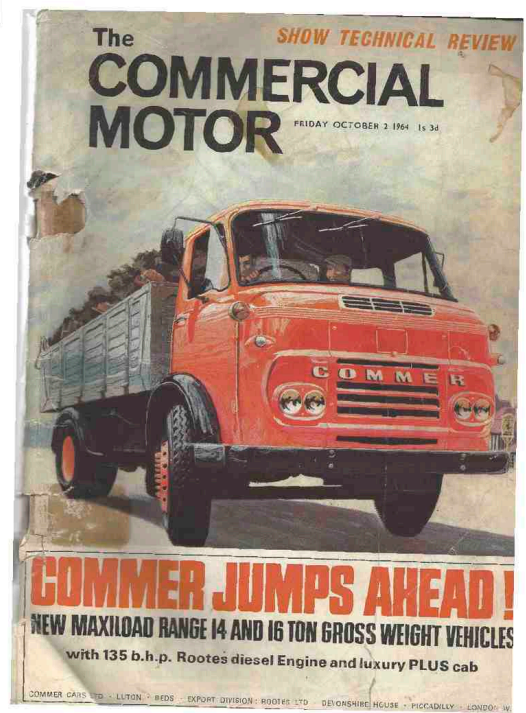


If buses could have rear engines, why not lorries? That was the thinking at Thompsons. And the 'Autotanker' was the result. Note the single front cab entry door. Lesney made a Matchbox model of it and... That was it. (CHC aai268)





**Above:** It's hard to imagine what Atkinson designers were out to achieve with the 'Guardsman' cab. True, it had a forward of wheel arch cab step. And – a massive advance on an Atki – a one-piece screen. But it was still coachbuilt and didn't tilt. It's only claim to fame? Our Malcolm sat in this very vehicle on the stand! (CHC aaj999)



**Above:** It's 1964 and Britain is by now well into the 'Swinging Sixties'. After an amazingly long production life, the 'QX' range of forward control Commers (modelled as lorries by Corgi and as a fire engine by Dinky) were by now being left behind as lorry gross weights started to increase. A typical Rootes mid-life 'makeover' held on to sales, until the new 14 to 16ton 'Maxiload' made it's debut. It looked impressive enough but, before the decade was out, Rootes, one of Britain's leading vehicle manufacturers, would be taken over by Chrysler. There were plenty of other newcomers at the show too – including the new Guy 'Big J' range, the tilt-cab Austin/Morris 'FJ' range and the Cummins V8-powered Dennis 'Maxim'. On the bus and coach side, we had the new 36 feet long Midland Red 'CM5T' which appeared as a diecast model by Budgie and Corgi.

## PERSONAL MEMORIES OF EARLS COURT CONTINUED

non-SMMT affiliated manufacturer of the Rowe 'Hillmaster', outside the entire Earls Court complex altogether, in the forecourt of West Brompton Underground station, over the road!

Above all, though, my lasting memories are about 'colour' – seeing brand new buses, vans and lorries resplendent in their show finish paint jobs. Many were in the liveries of leading operators – the staid dark blue of Pickfords, the highly colourful signwriting of Russell of Bathgate, the cool red and cream of the Ribble 'Gay Hostess' double deck Atlantean coaches. Oil companies and brewers were also a favourite choice, but a barometer of social change could also be spotted as the liveries of the supermarket chains started to feature more strongly. Yeah, seeing new lorries and buses 'in colour' was a major treat in my youth as, apart from a few full-colour adverts, all the trade magazines were still printed in black and white – and continued to be so until 'Truck' magazine

came on the scene.

Perhaps it was the 'authority' that Earls Court had? Unlike the 'jobsworths' at the NEC, the security staff at Earls Court were 'commissionaires', with an ex-military persona and pukka uniforms. For visitors, it was very much a case of being herded into the pay booths and going through old-fashioned turnstyles. As a youth, it took me quite a while to work out how to gain entry to Earls Court without a ticket. In contrast, half a lifetime later, it took ten minutes to work-out how to do that at the NEC!

As a fan of 1930s architecture, member of the 1930s Society, as well as a commentator on new products and systems in my 'day job', I am saddened by the destruction of this iconic 1930s building – just at a time when we're starting to recognise the value of conserving buildings from more recent decades. Not that I'd want Earls Court to be held in some early post-war timewarp, converted into a Wetherspoons, or a 'shopping mall', you

understand. Sure, it would have needed a considerable investment to bring back some of the glamour of earlier years. Was it ever 'glamorous'? Ummm, I'm not sure. But Earls Court had something that the NEC, or the low-rent 'Ex-cel' haven't got.

A balcony that allowed even the humblest schoolboy to have a panoramic view of an entire industry.

### WERE YOU THERE?

Did you ever visit Earls Court in its heyday? Do our Malcolm's memories chime with yours? Or did you think the cheese sandwiches represented good value and represented all that was best of British cuisine? More importantly what new cars, vans, lorries or buses do you remember seeing during your visit? At Vintage Roadscene, we'd love to hear your first-hand memories. Contact Mike Forbes....





1: BMC could have struck gold with the all-steel tilt-cab FJ, but fluffed the engineering. This Earls Court Show exhibit was as close as it got – gold paint. (CHC aaa047)

2: Oddly, Leyland didn't initially introduce the new 'Ergomatic' cab across its range. Besides, AEC fans will always argue the new cab looked better with AEC badging, as here on this Marshall six wheeler at the 1964 show. (CHC aaa049)

3: What drugs were Foden designers on? In fact, the 'Twin Load' made sense – being more stable than an artic under braking and easier to reverse than a 'wagon and drag'. Unfortunately, back in 1964 the haulage industry didn't think so. Here, the show exhibit arrives at the West Brompton entrance – the station forecourt was used by Rowe of 'Hillmaster' fame. (CHC aaa061)

4: Rootes Brothers get heavy. The new Commer 'Maxiload' in show finish of light blue, white and added chrome arrives on the back of a drawbar trailer hauled by a Beck & Pollitzer Scammell. (CHC aaa086)



Girls. Girls. Girls. Earls Court isn't known for its hot summer weather, so we can only assume the lack of warm clothing on these 'models' has another purpose – like attracting press photographers perhaps? This picture was actually taken on the forecourt of Earls Court at the start of the Mechanical Handling Exhibition rather than the Commercial Motor Show, but hey... (CHC aal251)



**2: It could have worked. But it didn't. The Foden 'Twin Load' concept turned the British-to-the-core eight-wheeler into a mini road train, without the need to employ a second man in the cab as 'brakesman', when clearly, all that was**

**3:** We all tend to think of the Leyland 'Ergo' as a modern design – true, although when the cab tilted, unlike on a modern truck, it left half the floor behind bolted to the chassis – a feature that made for draughts and leaks in later life.

After years of conservatism, Atkinson finally had a go at a 'new' cab in 1964. The new 'Guardsman' cab fitted to a tractor unit in Bulwark colours featured a Cummins V8E-235 diesel, but the cab was still fixed. Also, it was still 'coachbuilt' using wood, alloy and fibreglass, rather than steel. It was never seen again. Aged 13, our Malcolm actually got to sit in the cab on the Atkinson stand!

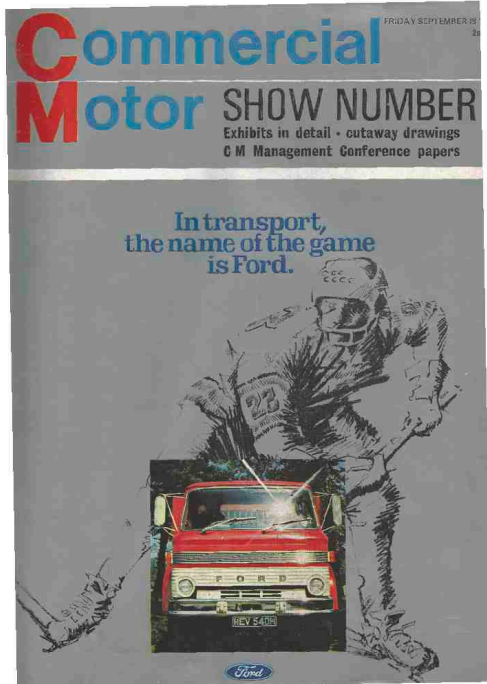
*If you had to narrow down the delights of an exhibition at Earls Court to just two things? It would have to be the unveiling of a brand new model. And quite possibly, the unveiling of a... Well, an attractive female 'model' perhaps? Once upon a time, models were considered as essential accoutrements, to decorate the hardware. As you might expect **Malcolm Bates** has been devoting considerable 'research' into this matter.*

I was lucky enough to be an 'exhibitor' at the very last CV Show at Earls Court. In contrast to being able to design the stand, the vehicle liveries and, of course, all the brochures at the following NEC event, my role at Earls Court was more muted. It was the launch of the then new Shelvoke 'SPV Range', but although a long-time SMMT member, Shelvoke & Drewry only managed to secure a small stand under the balcony.

But the really interesting sights could often be found outside the exhibition hall. Queues of sparkling new vehicles, either being driven in on trade plates, or sometimes unloaded from low-loaders. Sales and technical staff from all the various manufacturers walking around trying to get a peek at what the 'opposition' had on show. And, of course, the journalists and photographers from all the

While I'm sure such people existed before the war, the sometimes tenuous connection between the model and the real thing makes it hard to establish whether whoever produced the drawings for pre-war tinplate or diecast models had ever seen a real car – let alone a lorry or bus. Only a very few 'models' were recognisable as being based on a real life prototype – the tiny Dinky Toys AEC 'Q-Type', the Chrysler 'Airflow' saloon and also the as-it-happens trendily streamlined





→ continued from page 39

What the London skyline is tragically about to be robbed of was once a major technical challenge that involved the piling and erection of a vast concrete deck over the electrified railway tracks of the District and Circle lines and the creation of a large main hall with second floor balcony, together with all the catering and support functions. But as if that wasn't impressive enough... Well, remember the Boat show? Ever wonder how they managed to get enough water in there to float a whole load of boats? And hang on, wasn't I just telling you just now how the whole main floor area was above some electrified

Left: Ten years later, Ford did it again – not only with another front cover advert on 'Commercial Motor' (note the 'The' has now been dropped as part of a trendy restyle), but also with an improved range that included 'D Series' models right up to 28 tons GCW. With the Escort and Transit taking a large market share at the lower end of the weight range, this was arguably the peak of Ford's popularity in the UK. In contrast, BMC (or 'Austin-Morris' as the division was now called under British Leyland control) was still offering the 'Minor' 6-8 cwt van and the even old-fashioned 10 cwt van and pick-up, based on 1956 Austin car pressings. When BMC did introduce a 'modern' new design for the new decade, it turned out to be the disastrous 'LD' replacement, the 'EA'. 1970 also saw the arrival of the Leyland 'National' single decker which, along with further nationalisation, saw off many of the remaining passenger vehicle bodybuilders. Chrysler UK had now imposed its 'Penta-star' logo on Commer-Karrier, ERFs still came with plodding Gardner diesels, leaving them wide open to attack by Volvo and Scania, while the Scammell and Guy divisions of British Leyland exhibited strong signs of independence (Guy with a stonking 350hp Big 'J' 56 ton GCW eight-wheeler for export markets, Scammell introducing the new 'Samson' with a lovely 'range' advert), while the BL Group parent was on an ego-trip (or should that be 'Ergo-Trip?') with the unveiling of the 'hush-hush' gas turbine tractor units that could have finally repaid all those years of research by Rover boffins.

railway lines? How did they manage to do that?

One reason it worked so well at Earls Court was that under the main exhibition floor was an enormous swimming pool. This was accessed by lowering massive retractable floor sections designed by Fraser & Chalmers Engineering, undertaken on behalf of the London Hydraulic Power Company. The three retractable sections weighed over 700 tonnes. Earls Court also featured large hydraulic goods lifts from ground level up to the balcony floor, pedestrian escalators and lots of classic 'moderne' motifs, which suggested London was right up there with the latest trends.

Sure, it could be argued that the whole idea of siting a major exhibition venue, surrounded by streets full of shops, pubs, restaurants and houses was asking for major congestion. True, things certainly got pretty bad by the late 1960s, but back in the late 1930s and '40s, few would have ventured into Central London by car when they could have used the train. If they even had a car, that is.

Today, driving into London has been made even more difficult by the policies of the so-called 'Transport for London' office of the Mayor. Spy cameras to raise cash from petty traffic indiscretions, speed humps and outrageous parking costs would be okay if 'rail' was a more affordable and 'customer friendly' option. Worth noting then, with the exception of the much-heralded 'Crossrail' project, that the railway infrastructure of today is pretty much the same as it was back in the 1930s.

So you could argue that Transport for London has actually helped make Earls Court less viable, by making it harder for people to get into London. I'm left wondering what could have been achieved if, instead, they'd seen their jobs as 'making things easier'. Put it this way, those in power in London over the years must have doing something fundamentally wrong to make somewhere in the West Midlands seem like an attractive alternative visitor destination for an exhibition!

So, as the saying goes, once it's gone, it's gone.

## MAKES AND MODELS CONTINUED

Holland Coachcraft vans (see the real thing on Page 34) are amongst the earliest that come to mind, but even some early post-war models were still 'generic'.

If we factor-in the time it would have taken for a company like Meccano to produce detailed drawings for moulds, much of what ended up in the toy cupboards of boys during the 1950s and '60s can be directly traced back to the new model announcements from the 1948 Motor Show. It could be argued that the launch of the iconic Jaguar XK120 was the first real sign that, after years of wartime production, the mighty British vehicle industry had finally got its mojo back and was ready to take on the world. But what about the more humble Bedfords, the Trojan vans and the Guy Vixens?

As the period trade magazines at the time confirm, they too had a role in helping to earn essential export Dollars. In fact, as a look through any post-war diecast model or plastic kit catalogue will confirm, what was seen for the first time at Earls Court, soon ended up in the model-makers catalogues. Even if the process often seemed to take a while.

How do I know this? Well, the truth is, neither Editor Mike nor yours truly have ever met anyone who said: "Yes, I was a model researcher for Dinky Toys, Corgi Toys, Spot-on, Budgie, Lesney or whatever..." We'd love to do so, because they would be able to provide a valuable insight into how the whole – often somewhat bizarre-seeming – selection process was determined.

But you've only got to look at some of the models that made it into the catalogues. In many cases, they were built either as prototypes, or to specifically 'make a statement' at the show. Indeed, the Jaguar XK120 was only ever perceived by Jaguar as a limited edition 'showcase' for the twin-cam six cylinder engine. It was only thanks to an overwhelming demand, that it ended up as a long-running production car.

Whoever they were, the 'talent scouts' from the diecast model-makers clearly weren't that well-up on the corporate machinations of the vehicle industry – otherwise, for example, the fabulous Dinky 'Supertoys' Maudslay/Harrington horsebox would have never been commissioned. Before the model was even

announced, Maudslay had been taken over by AEC – and yet, clearly, the beauty of the Maudslay product had impressed the model-makers enough for them to also commission (at a smaller scale) a half-deck observation coach as well. This was clearly more a pre-war concept than a product of the nuclear age. There are other questions we'd love to ask as well. Such as why Foden do so well in the Dinky range, when arch-rival ERF had to wait until the arrival of Spot-on to get a decent-sized model eight-wheeler? And how come often well-established brands such as Thornycroft, Seddon and Atkinson did so badly, in model terms?

My point is? I can only assume the talent scouts from the model-makers don't seem to have spent much time asking questions of the vehicle manufacturers prior to a diecast model getting the go-ahead. Could it be that the scouts were over-awed with the choice before them at Earls Court? Or they just needed to get some ideas in the bag, before catching the train back to Liverpool, or wherever? Perhaps they were influenced by which manufacturer's staff treated them to the best lunch? Hang





**Above:** Luckily, the Leyland 'National', was not as well received as British Leyland might have hoped, but it certainly did bodybuilders no favours. After the 1970 show, when it finally appeared, it seemed you could have one in red or green. How exciting. (CHC abh341)

**Right** It's a gas. Or at least at the time, Leyland thought it might be. This impressive Gas Turbine five axle tanker was trailed by Castrol after the show, but most lorry fans had to wait over 40 years to see the main show exhibit tractor unit move under its own power, thanks to Tony Knowles and at the Gaydon show! (CHC abk426)



As you read this, Earls Court is about to be demolished and replaced with a load of tacky flats – very few of which will be affordable by London residents. It's passing shouldn't go unmarked in Vintage Roadscene – after all, many of the vans, lorries and buses featured within our pages will have originally been exhibited there!

## CONCLUSION

Are there any ghosts in Earls Court? There may well be, once it's knocked down. The ghosts of great expectations. Disappointing interest after all hopes were pinned on success. Or in some cases – all too few perhaps – where a last minute appearance propelled a basically sound idea into being a world-beater. Off-hand I can't think of any obvious candidates for the latter from the lorry or bus sector, but the Austin Healey 100/4 sports car is a positive example from the car world. But perhaps it's the quirky, low volume 'might have beens' that help make the Vintage Roadscene so interesting to us today?

on, I'm pretty sure I can't hint at bribery and corruption without falling foul of the editorial guidelines manual.

Either way, the fact remains, within the pages of the model-makers catalogues can be found a considerable number of vehicles that were originally on show – in full scale – at Earls Court. Sometimes the choice was inspired; Ever Ready Batteries really did run dropside ERFs like the one modelled by Lesney – although I've not seen a picture of a Guy Vixen van in those fleet colours. Sometimes it was obscure – it's highly unlikely that any aspiring boy transport manager would have ever seen the one-and-only Mulliner-bodied Guy coach in real life. It might have been a 'bold statement' at the CV show, but no orders were forthcoming. The product planners at Spot-On clearly hadn't taken into account how conservative UK coach operators were.

An even more obscure one was the 'Jen-Helecs' tractor and trailer in British Railways maroon. True, British Railways did operate some 'Jen-Tugs', but these were powered by an Austin A40 petrol engine. The battery-electric Jen-Helecs was only built for some operational

trials and like several generations of 'hybrid' soon vanished from the scene.

Talking about 'making a statement' at Earls Court, what about the fantastic Thompson 'tanker of the future'? The idea of a transverse rear-engined, four-axle petrol tanker, with a forward-thrusting driver's cab, featuring panoramic, wrap-round windscreens, seemed like just the thing for the 'motorway age' – and indeed it's modern looks might help explain why no model manufacturer seemed interested in featuring an exposed radiator Atkinson. But, although it was a great publicity exercise, the Thompson tanker just wasn't really ever part of the 'roadscene' in 'real life' as, even before the concept of 'Elf and Safety' was invented, the notion of a high-speed lorry with a single door into the cab (positioned where the radiator grill was located on the Atki) must have frightened the drivers' unions something rotten – even if a roof-mounted escape hatch was included!

I can remember seeing this space-age tanker in the flesh (so to speak) at Earls Court and remember thinking how great the future was going to be. When I was a schoolboy, my parents took the Daily Express (in the days

when it was a leading newspaper) and one of the cartoon strips featured an industrial espionage detective called Jeff Hawke. He was proudly British of course, so he drove a Rover. Not a Rover of the 'auntie' persuasion you understand, but a 'Turbo-Dyne' mid-engined sports car, clearly based on the Rover gas turbine concept cars. No lorries, as far as I can recall, ever featured in the Jeff Hawke column. But if they had, they would have looked like that Thompson tanker, I'm sure.

And more recently? There's another gas turbine connection to be made here. Sadly, Rover was consumed by British Leyland, but that led to the creation of the Leyland 'Ergo' gas turbine tractor units. Again, these were modelled – straight from their show debut. Although it was stated at the time that several would be undergoing working trials in the fleets of the major oil companies, it's highly unlikely that any young aspiring fleet manager/model collector would ever have seen one in action. So again, an odd choice for a model – even if it was fitting that it was the oil companies put the prototypes on trial. Only they could afford the fuel bills!



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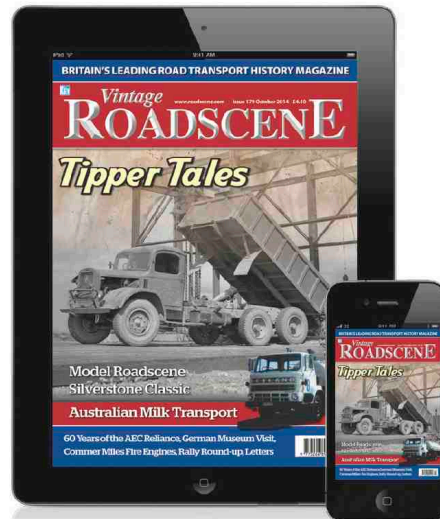
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# Coaching on the Kent & Sussex Borders

*Chris Salaman is well-known in lorry enthusiast circles, but back in the 1960s, he worked for Gilbert's Coaches of Tunbridge Wells.*



**Above:** A fleet 'line-up' of Gilbert's Coaches at the High Brooms garage in Tunbridge Wells in 1958, a few years before Chris Salaman drove for the company. Two early post-war Bedford OB/Dupe coaches, JKM 536 (Kent, 1947) and BJR 679 (Northumberland, 1947) flank three pre-war Bedford WTBs, CEL 324 (Bournemouth, 1936), DXD 783 (London, 1937) and FMP367 (Middlesex, 1937), with a Leyland Tiger and Dennis Lancet on the right.

**H**arry Gilbert had set up business immediately upon demobilisation in 1919, purchasing an ex-WD Ford 'Tin Lizzie', with demountable charabanc body that could therefore be used for both goods and passenger carrying purposes. From this one vehicle start, he became the sole coach operator with the Tunbridge Wells area with an office at his home in Sutherland Road.

While Ashline from Tonbridge and Warrens from Ticehurst vied for similar work, the monopoly within Tunbridge Wells was his, with the result that his business grew quickly, in the days before the advent of popular motoring for the masses. The vehicle yard and eventual garage were sited in High Brooms suburb, where Harry acquired part of the old High Brooms quarry.

The general haulage side of his business had specialised in household removals for which a large furniture depository was likewise erected at High Brooms. Most of the Bedford furniture vans were ex-Pickfords removals vehicles. These were painted apple green and cream, as opposed to the two-tone blue of the coach fleet. Interestingly, Harry never bought a new

**INTERESTINGLY, HARRY NEVER BOUGHT A NEW VEHICLE, ALWAYS PREFERRING A GOOD SECOND-HAND BARGAIN!**

vehicle, always preferring a good second-hand bargain! Drivers would often swop duties from coach driving to removal work, thus providing a versatile workforce. He was subsequently in business for over 50 years...

I recall my own early days in passenger transport in this region of South-east England. Although I was originally trained and worked

for London Transport, as we worked a seven day shift, with a resulting three or four day rest period, I was able to return to my home town of Royal Tunbridge Wells on the Kent and Sussex borders.

Officially, LT did stipulate that, while in its employ, one was not allowed to work for other operators, so that no driving hours regulations were contravened. However, since my rest days constituted a fairly lengthy time period, I unofficially elected to offer my services to my local coach operator, which had been based in Tunbridge Wells since World War I.

Thus it was that this driver (badge no N82808) apprehensively reported to the premises of Harry Gilbert in High Brooms, a suburb of Tunbridge Wells, not knowing what might be asked of me. I knew that Harry Gilbert had an ageing fleet of luxury coaches, but was thrilled to find out on arrival that



many of these were of pre-war origin and comprised half-cab AEC Regals, Leyland Tiger, Dennis Lancet and half a dozen Bedfords, ranging from WTBs to SBs.

The garage looked empty of staff, as I stood awaiting someone to appear. Suddenly a voice spoke from beyond and a figure appeared, in the form of leading driver Fred Cheeseman, a stoutish man of middle years, sporting a full head of hair. After an initial informal chat he asked me to hop into one of the newest vehicles, the Duple-bodied SB, and go out for a little test drive which Fred was most pleased with. On return to the garage, a welcome cup of tea was at hand and I enquired when I would actually be required for any work. Fred replied almost instantaneously that if I liked I could do a little afternoon job that same day, for the local Womens' Institute, an afternoon Spring Blossom tour with a stop for tea thrown in, and that I should use the SB for this job.

Now I should point out at this stage that this was the newest vehicle in the fleet, dating from 1951 and bought second-hand by Harry a few years previously. It was in nice condition, with a 37-seat body and powered by a Bedford 300 cu in petrol engine. I soon discovered that it took quite a time to get up to its maximum speed of well over 40 miles an hour, but stopping at this speed with vacuum servo brakes was another matter altogether! As this was the mid-1960s, Harry's fleet was already somewhat dated!

Gilbert's Luxury Coaches were painted in a delightful two-tone blue with gold lettering and, when cleaned and polished, looked remarkably smart for their age. Maintenance



**Above:** The AEC 'Regal', CDY 408 (Hastings, 1945), with what looks like the classic Duple body, seen at White Rock, Hastings with its driver, Fred Cheeseman.

was 'in-house', with fellow leading driver George Akehurst, a chap of a similar age to Fred, but with sharp facial features and thinning swept-back greyish hair, doing much of the basic servicing 'as and when' required.

The main garage at High Brooms was capable of housing four coaches and had two excellent inspection pits for maintenance checks. All the petrol-powered vehicles were fuelled from the business's own fuel pump which had a very inaccurate gauge! (This proved very convenient from my point of view

when, after a few months working for the company, both Fred and George allowed me to fill my own van with running expenses!).

So it was that I arrived at my first job pick-up point and was greeted by a host of elderly females eagerly awaiting their afternoon's transport. After introducing myself, the leader of my party hastily boarded my coach, followed by the rest of the group, whereupon I was given the afternoon's itinerary. This I was a little apprehensive about, as it involved negotiating some very narrow lanes in the



**Above:** This Leyland 'Tiger', with an early wartime London registration, GLU 360, and dated-looking pre-war style body with its stepped window line, stayed in service until 1965, when it was offered to Chris for £50...





**Above:** A full-fronted AEC 'Regal' Mk III, GRY 45 (Leicester, 1950), seen at the High Brooms yard, with an early Bedford SB/Duple Super Vega, 5 AMM (Middlesex, 1954), with the oval grille – quite modern by Gilbert's standards...

Under River region between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks, among the wooded slopes of the Weald of Kent.

So off we set and, not long afterwards, we turned off the beaten track and headed deep into the heart of unspoilt countryside. Every corner we turned, my heart was in my mouth for fear of meeting another large vehicle head-on. Suddenly, dropping down a steep incline, my eyes focused on the distant horizon, where I could see the narrow lane meandering its way beyond and, to my horror, my worst fears were realised. There, some way ahead, was a large farm tractor, pulling a heavily-laden trailer of hay towards us! As we were still some way from this obstacle, I started hastily to seek out a suitable passing place. Nothing seemed to appear, as we got closer and closer to this obstruction when, finally on rounding a particularly sharp bend, we suddenly found ourselves face to face! One of us would obviously have to reverse - but

who? Although I had the larger vehicle, mine would be the easier of the two to back up – but for how far? Needless to say, after much thinking, I eventually reversed back for what seemed like ages, until I found a field gateway that I had missed earlier. In due course, the ladies rewarded me with a delicious cream tea, so it was well worth all the aggravation

**■ ■ SUDDENLY, DROPPING DOWN A STEEP INCLINE, MY EYES FOCUSED ON THE DISTANT HORIZON, WHERE I COULD SEE THE NARROW LANE MEANDERING ITS WAY BEYOND AND, TO MY HORROR, MY WORST FEARS WERE REALISED.**

experienced at the start of the afternoon's travel.

On about my third visit to do some part-time driving, I was standing in the garage awaiting the arrival of either Fred or George, when the door opened and a rather elderly gentleman entered and, seeing me standing doing nothing, immediately told me to grab a

broom and clean up the corner of the garage! This was my initial meeting with Harry Gilbert in person. He had started the business just after World War I when, like so many other entrepreneurial drivers, he had bought an old second-hand Ford Model 'T' flatbed. During the daylight hours, this had a lift-on body with seats, while at night, it reverted to a flatbed, carrying produce to Covent Garden fruit and vegetable market in London.

From this small beginning he had become the only coach operator in Tunbridge Wells and stayed so for many years, the nearest competition being Ashline in Tonbridge and

Warrens in nearby Ticehurst, both the latter having similar origins. Now well past retiring age, he still took an active part in the day to day running of the business and I soon got to know and respect him for the man he was.

From then on, I did many small 'private hire' jobs, but it was the regular school contract work that provided the guaranteed daily



'bread and butter' income. Gilbert's main school contract job was for Kent College at Pembury, just outside Tunbridge Wells where, every day, three coaches would collect day pupils from the town's central bus stops and convey them on the three mile journey to the College, one of the country's leading independent girls' schools, returning them at the end of day's schooling in late afternoon.

Now, for the uninitiated, I should point out at this juncture, that one would expect a high standard of behaviour and deportment from girls receiving this expensive education. Don't you believe it! I had been warned to expect the unexpected and, true enough, within a few weeks of my first school contract job, I experienced the first example of my charges' unexpected and unruly behaviour.

The back end of any PSV always attracts the less well-behaved element of society. As momentarily I gazed in my rear view mirror and there, hanging out of one of the rear windows, was a pair of navy blue underwear!

I glanced twice, not believing what I had seen the first time and, with the second glance, stared a little longer, to my own misfortune. As my eyes returned to looking ahead, I suddenly found we were driving completely on the wrong side of the road, necessitating immediate action on my behalf to avoid hitting oncoming traffic, much to the delight of my passengers, who roared in fits of

## IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE I REPORTED FOR A DAY'S WORK AND FOUND MYSELF BEING ALLOCATED TO ONE OF THE OLDER VEHICLES IN THE FLEET RESULTING IN MY SKILLS OF DOUBLE-DECLUTCHING BEING BROUGHT TO THE FORE.

uncontrollable giggles and laughter.

It wasn't long before I reported for a day's work and found myself being allocated to one of the older vehicles in the fleet resulting in my skills of double-declutching being brought to the fore. The vehicle in question was a pre-war Dennis half-cab 35-seater that was considerably slower to manipulate than the lighter Bedfords. This was allocated to a school

contract job and, in this case being a half-cab, gave the driver complete immunity from the saloon seating area – thus no physical contact with passengers.

I did, of course, have to climb in and out of the cab to open and close the entrance/exit door. The speed of this much older and heavier coach took some getting used to, particularly as one had to take far more care in anticipating turns and other similar manoeuvres. There was no power steering so, in theory, the slower you went, the heavier the actual steering became. This could prove to be a headache in urban areas, where much turning was necessary, along with gear changing with double-declutching between every change.

But, all in all, I got to love the feel of these elderly motors and, sadly, it was not long after my initial employment that Harry decided to sell off all the pre-war fleet. I was at first bitterly disappointed to hear of this decision but then, out of the blue, he asked me whether I might care to purchase one of them myself. Before I had time to reply, he informed me that I could



Above: The Dennis 'Lancet', AUT 194 (Leicester, 1938), in which Chris was initiated to school contracts, seen at Wembley with an equally frightening-looking load of schoolgirls.



have any of them for £50 each – cash only!

The temptation was enormous, but where was I going to park a large commercial vehicle of this size? I thought long and hard and, having already acquired a pre-war Austin 18 ambulance, which I had parked at the back of my father's house, I considered asking him whether I might add to my collection. It did seem a liberty, but waiting for the opportune moment would seem the sensible option.

And thus it was that I acquired one of this superb fleet in the form of a Bedford WTB. Sadly it was not to be for long, as I soon found that there was far more to owning a vehicle of this size than just being able to drive it. Maintenance was another matter altogether, and having the right tools and ability to work on a large commercial was a skill that I had yet to acquire. But as luck would have it, I found another buyer almost immediately.

The other half-cab in the fleet worthy of note was Fred Cheeseman's AEC Regal which, like all the other venerable members of this fleet, had a character all to its own. Slow they were, but what delightfully period noises would emanate when turning across steep cambers, causing the body to creak and groan under duress, as the spring eyes rolled in the shackles and the ash-framed bodywork stretched to excess movement, all in a perfectly natural way!

Those were halcyon days indeed. It was on one of the rare occasions I was given this particular vehicle that I found myself bound for a day out at Syon Park, in West London and, on the return trip I decided to throw in a 'little extra', by taking my coach-load of disabled youngsters, on their one and only annual outing from their residential home, through Richmond Great Park, to show them the deer in natural surroundings.

I had inadvertently completely overlooked the fact that anything other than a private



Above: A Leyland 'Tiger', JA 5514 (Stockport, 1935) – ex-North Western? – seen at Hastings.

motor vehicle required a permit from the Royal Parks constabulary to enter the park. Half-way through traversing this beautiful landscape, I was suddenly aware of a white Land Rover, speeding from among the distant trees, on the side of which was written in bold letters 'POLICE'.

The vehicle in question eventually drove across my path, broadside on, and a uniformed constable hurriedly alighted from the Land Rover, requesting me to show my official permit. I was at a loss for words, as he withdrew his note book from his pocket, and asked me for my particulars. I began by telling him that these disabled children had but one outing a year and I had decided that, on our return trip home, to treat them to seeing the deer. As he listened, his attention was drawn to

fact that there were now some 30-odd pitiful faces all staring out at the two of us. Slowly, he stopped writing, returned the book and pen to his top pocket, informing me that, in future, I must obtain an official permit before entering a Royal Park, to which I assured him that I would. He then informed me that, for the rest of this journey he would provide an escort to all the lesser-known points of interest within Richmond Great Park!

But eventually, after a number of years working for Gilbert's Luxury Coaches, all good things had to come to an end and, sadly, Harry decided to retire, now well past official retiring age, and the business was sold to another local concern, Beeline Radio Taxis of Tunbridge Wells. This was run by the Maynard brothers, who hailed from my village of Speldhurst and went on to build up a thriving coach business, under the name of Beeline Coaches, for the next few years, and with whom I was pleased to carry on my association as a part-time driver. In this time, they acquired many new additions to the fleet and enlarged the workforce considerably but, all in all, it lost the atmosphere of the pre-war elegance that had prevailed while Harry Gilbert still ran the business.



Left: The Tiger is seen at Victoria Coach Station in this less than perfect picture, presumably on hire to one of the bigger companies, East Kent or Maidstone & District, for a trip to or from Leysdown, whose passengers would have been used to something newer by the 1950s, but no doubt had a comfortable ride in this fine old vehicle.



# When the Big Boys Came to Town

**Colin Pratt**, the 'Jester from Leicester' has sent us some great pictures of outsize loads making their way through Hinkley, Leicestershire, courtesy of the editor of 'The Hinckley Times', to whom we are most grateful.



**Above:** The picture Colin remembers from the 1960s, with the Wrekin Roadways Scammell Highwayman, WUJ 450 (Shropshire, 1961), named 'The Conqueror', pulling a lengthy box-section, carried between two of the company's trailers, around a seemingly impossible junction, as the crowds – and a BRS Parcels 'Noddy' van – look on.

Colin says: "What interesting photographs they were of 'The Big Boys', of construction vehicles, from Leo Pratt in December's issue of *Vintage Roadscene*. This reminded me of a picture of a Wrekin Roadways Scammell Highwayman coming down Castle Street in Hinkley in the

1960s, at which time this was part of the A47.

I asked my friend, Simon Holden, editor of 'The Hinckley Times', if he would delve into the archives and find this photograph for me. To my amazement, he came up with a few more than I expected, all of which you might be interested in.

Having been there and done this type of

work, believe me, to come through Hinkley with loads like this, you would need nerves of steel and eyes in the back of your head.

By the way, I have been asked many times: "Are you related to Leo Pratt?" Well, I looked through my family history, right back to Adam and Eve, and he will be relieved to know that I am not."





Above: Wynns Volvo F89 six-wheeled tractor unit, ABO 421T (Cardiff, 1979), looks as if it might be popping into the Union Hotel for a quick pint of Marston's. Actually, with low-loader trailer, fleet no 1013, carrying a large vessel, is making a difficult turn in Hinckley town centre, from Regent Street into Stockwell Head, now the B590.



Above: Also photographed outside the Union Hotel, but from another angle, is Wynns Scania 140 V8-powered six-wheeled unit, KAX 396P (Cardiff, 1975), possibly being used with a ballast box, judging from the front axle on the 'trombone' extending low-loader trailer, carrying a similar vessel. Note the ladder, used to climb up and lift telephone wires and the like over the high load. (It looks as if the Scania could do with its nearside headlight adjusted – just a little soapbox I like to get onto every now and then....)





Above and below: A little more recently, as the M69 is shown on the signpost, but before the A47 by-passed Hinckley, DAF 2800 two-axle tractor unit, XAH 980X (Norwich, 1982-3), of Vanguard Machinery Movement, later to become part of Pickfords, is shown not too far away from where the Wynns vehicles were pictured, with a similar-looking vessel on a tri-axle 'trombone' trailer. Note the flexible air hoses along the side to the brakes on the rear bogie. Again, if you're going to put the headlights on, make sure they're dipped properly...







# Twins2niwT

*Barry Fenn takes a different angle on the rally scene, with a look back at last year's events from a different perspective.*

**W**hen I was looking through my rally pictures from 2014, some I looked at twice and some I looked at again. I noticed a trend had developed.

This magazine and its spin-offs have featured a number of preserved fleet pictures in recent months, where several different vehicle belonging to the same owner or in the same livery have been parked together, reminding us of what a fleet might have looked like in the operator's yard.

There are a few pairs here a bit like that, but others are more in the way of what might be called 'variations on a theme'. It seems like a good way of filling in the dark days of winter, by reminding ourselves of what a good summer we had last year – with hopes for another in 2015...



**Above:** Two ERFs, at first glance identical and, although not seen in this view, both with the set-back front axle, but the North Shropshire Transport-liveried vehicle is a four-wheeler, while the Graham W Dale vehicle is an eight-wheeler. They were parked together at the Onslow Park Steam Rally, near Shrewsbury last August.



**Left:** Two well-known AEC Mammoth Major III eight-wheeled tankers, seen together at the South Cerney rally in August 2014. The picture offers the chance to compare and contrast the different coachbuilt cabs, beyond the obvious exposed and concealed radiators, not to mention the differences in the actual tanks.

**Right:** Another pair of interesting vehicles as they are unusual survivors in preservation, two Dodge Barreiros lorries from the late 1970s, belonging to John Weaver of Leominster. Seen at the Classic Commercial Show at Gaydon in June, on the right is a K38 tractor unit, while the vehicle on the left is a platform-bodied six-wheeler.



**Left:** Two Perkins-engined Seddon Mk 5L platform lorries, with detail differences, from William Hunter's fleet of preserved lorries, seen at the Riverside Rally, near Southport in April 2014. These are among many Seddon vehicles to be seen in our 'Road Haulage Archive' issue 1 on Seddons.

**Below:** These two Sentinel steam waggons in Tarmac livery were seen at the Onslow Park rally last August. On the left is a 1929 DG8 No 8016, while on the right is a 1933 S6 No 8821. The differences between the earlier and later models are obvious, but it's great to see them together.







**Above:** An opportunity to compare the Foden DG and FG cabs, with these two from the fleet of A Evans of Bishops Castle. The DG4 platform lorry of 1946 on the left contrasts with the FG ballast tractor of 1954 on the right.

**Right:** A pair of almost identical Austin A40 vans seen at the wet Classic Van and Pick-up day at Gaydon last August.

**Below:** Triplets, well nearly, this time, with three Dodges, seen at the Lincoln Steam Rally in August, with early and later 300 Series on the right and in the centre, with a later K500 Series tractor unit on the left.





It didn't rain all the time at the Gaydon van and pick-up show, as seen in this picture of three Bedford HAs, with two vans flanking a really rare pick-up version. You used to see them everywhere...



Left and right: Not really twins at all, but a chance to compare an example of the Austin A40 pick-up, JCJ 385 of 1951, with an A70 Hereford of a year later, seen at Scorton in June and Kirkby Stephen on Easter Sunday.

For a change, here are three different Scammells belonging to the Walter Family, with two S26 ex-military DROPS vehicles flanking a Handyman lined up at the Kettering Steam Fair last September.







**Above:** This fleet was seen at the Lincoln Steam Rally in August. Three Bedfords, with near twins, an OWST and OSST, plus a TM, were flanked by a Thames 4D platform lorry and an Atkinson Borderer, all in the livery of L.J. Brumpton of Bernetby Le Wold in North Lincolnshire.

**Right:** We've seen this Ergomatic-cabbed Albion Clydesdale tractor unit before, but here it is seen again at Leyland, next to the preserved example of the Atkinson bonnetted tractor produced for Pickfords discussed last month.

**Below:** Here's another impressive fleet of heavies in the Booth family's fleet, with an ex-military AEC Militant, Scania 143, Volvo F12 and Scammell Contractor seen together at the riverside Rally in April.







Above and right: Two Whitbread vehicles we've mentioned before seen together, with the Willys Overland Crossley carried on the back of the Dennis Max at the British Lorry Day at Leyland in September.



Above and right: Stephen Mayle's 1957 AEC Mandator ballast tractor in Westfield Transport livery has been on the rally scene for some years, pulling a platform trailer loaded with a weaving machine. Last year, it was seen with a different draw-bar low-loader with a four-in-line rear end, here at the Lincoln Steam Rally.





# The Motorman's Meet

## JPG WOFOLW9U,2 WGGf

**Keith Baldwin** went to Yorkshire in early January for the Motorman's Meet.



**Above:** A 1966 Austin FFK platform lorry, restored in the livery of H Kershaw & Sons of Oldham.

**Right:** This 1953 AEC Mandator tractor unit, ASL 473, has been restored in the livery of T G Morris & Sons of Leeds.

**K**eith says: "Little did I know, when I sent a report in October about a meeting of vehicles I attended in the Huddersfield-Marsden area, the first time I had been to this show, that I would return, and only three months later.

On 4th January 2015, I went to the Motorman's Meet. It was a very cold day, but the sun was shining, which meant the conditions were good for photographs. A good selection of vehicles had turned out, which made a very good start to the New Year. Here's hoping for it to continue for the rest of the year..."







**Left:** Two of four gritters on the run, most appropriate for the area, but luckily not needed, were restored ex-Department of Transport Atkinson MHV 522L and Foden M413 LYL.

**Below:** A more modern vehicle on the run, but still interesting, was this ERF EC11 double-drive tractor unit, J3 RMX, finished in the livery of Readymix, Huddersfield.



**1:** This AEC Matador recovery vehicle with a smart coachbuilt body, FSK 502, has been restored in Rotherham Transport livery.

**2:** This Atkinson Borderer tractor unit, DEB 536M, and its box van trailer have been restored in Comfortex livery.

**3:** Albion Reiver FFD 332K, complete with its mixer equipment, has been restored in the livery of RMC, Ready Mixed Concrete Wales Ltd.

**4:** With a load of two cable drums on its low-loader trailer, Scammell Highwayman, BAW 850B, makes a brave sight in its Wrekin Roadways livery.





# The Winter Gathering

## The MVT Essex Area Winter Meeting at Heybridge in January.

**Jim King** braved the cold and visited the Military Vehicle Trust Essex Area Winter Meeting at Heybridge in January.

**J**im says: "I attended a meeting held by the Military Vehicle Trust (MVT) Essex Branch, at The Jolly Sailor Pub, Heybridge Basin, Essex, on Sunday 18th January. It's official title is 'The Winter Gathering' but it is known to many as the 'Bumfreezer Event', very apt this year, as it was held in temperatures of just 2 degrees but at least it remained dry for the day.

For many years this, event has been organised by Shaun Morgan but, because of health reasons, 2014 was his last and it is now run by Jack Scott. A special thank you to Shaun for all his past efforts and we wish him well for the future.

I lost count after 60-odd vehicles had passed by me on the road to Heybridge and this year was really the year of the ex-military Land Rover. This was in part because of the parking restrictions at The Basin and many members brought along the smaller vehicles from their collections. However, this did not deter Jack Scott in his 1972 Alvis Scorpion tank (VHJ 496L) or Phil Nash in his 1941 Diamond T (217 YUE).

The MVT group do a lot of good work for local charities and also the 'Help for Heroes' fund as many of the members are ex-servicemen and women themselves.

I am always amazed at the large numbers of old vehicles that appear to surface on our roads at such a harsh time of the year especially as many of them have such low fuel consumption figures. A credit to all the owners concerned."

**Top:** The 1941 Diamond T980, 217 YUE, of Phil Nash of Braintree, Essex approaches the MVT Essex Meeting, at Heybridge Basin, Essex.

**Middle:** There was a large number of Land Rovers at the meeting, held at the Jolly Sailors public house at Heybridge Basin, including, 543 FUV (07 CE 27), a 1963 registered Land Rover Series 1, belonging to Richard Holmes of Maldon, Essex.

**Bottom:** One of several Jeeps attending was 544 YUP, a 1943 Ford GPW Jeep.







**Left:** The 1941 Dodge WC12, 673 XUP, of Will Burford of Maylandsea, Essex, is seen approaching the meeting, followed by another of the Jeeps, registered EDS 655B.



**Right:** Parked next to another Jeep, GCT 843, at the MVT Essex Meeting at Heybridge Basin, is Bedford MW, 929 ENV, its civilian registration dating from 1963, of J Smith of Essex.



Land Rovers all the way, with many different types of all ages to be seen.



**1:** Seen on the way to the meeting was JNN 608D, a 1955 Austin Champ, with its crew braving the cold with the screen folded flat...

**2:** This world War II staff car, an Austin 8 Tourer, re-registered PSV 208, was parked next to yet another Jeep at the Jolly Sailors.

**3:** A 1956 Land Rover Series 1, SLD 332 (suggesting an ex-AFS vehicle?) finished in desert camouflage by Bryan Wilson of Chelmsford, Essex, followed by a more modern Land Rover Defender, registered 700 DTC, shown on its plate in Army style, seen approaching Heybridge Basin.

**4:** 'Tail-end Charlies' – two Jeeps at the meeting, seen from the rear for a change.



**SPANISH STREETS**

BY G.N. GEORGANO

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The latest special issue associated with Autodromo, 'the quarterly publication dedicated to Spanish automotive history', is a collection of full-page photographs of interesting vehicles seen in Spain during the 1960s by Nick Georgano, who often contributes to this magazine. There are over 90 different pictures of cars, buses and lorries of all sorts – but all unusual and interesting and, above all, old. The

pictures are all excellent studies in black and white, beautifully reproduced in large format, offering a fascinating insight into what might be seen on the streets in Spain in years gone by, from stylish cars like Alfa Romeos and pre-war Fords and others, to commercials like Daimler trolleybuses, 'El Camion Inglés Leyland' and other commercials. This soft-back book is not cheap, but very interesting. If you are on the 'net, you can order it direct, otherwise try specialists like Hortons Books, Motor Books and David Thomas.

**MALTA'S DODGE-SHAPE BUSES**

Swords into ploughshares!

Roger F. de Boer

**MALTA'S DODGE-SHAPE BUSES – SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES**

BY ROGER F. DE BOER

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

ISBN: 9780-9541182-6-4

£12.50

This book looks at the many buses of Malta and Gozo which were based on ex-military Dodge chassis, plus others which used the Dodge panels for bonnet and front wings. After World War II, the Dodge military trucks stationed on Malta were re-used, some as civilian lorries, but others were converted in the 1950s-'60s, hence the subtitle for the book, 'Swords into Ploughshares'.

The author first visited Malta in 1977,

when there were still over 70 such buses running, but this had dwindled to two when the last of 23 visits was made in 2003. The buses served for so long, as they were rebuilt, with lengthened chassis, diesel engines replaced the original petrol power and at least 20 different coachbuilders were employed.

This book is not an extensive history, but mainly photographic, with nearly 160 pictures in its 56 pages, including some in colour, of the vehicles in service and after scrapping. There is reference to the religious shrines carried, a map, poems and a summary of the buses before and after 1977. A book which will bring back happy memories for any transport enthusiast who has enjoyed a visit to Malta.

**MERSEYSIDE TRANSPORT RECALLED**

BY MARTIN JENKINS AND CHARLES ROBERTS

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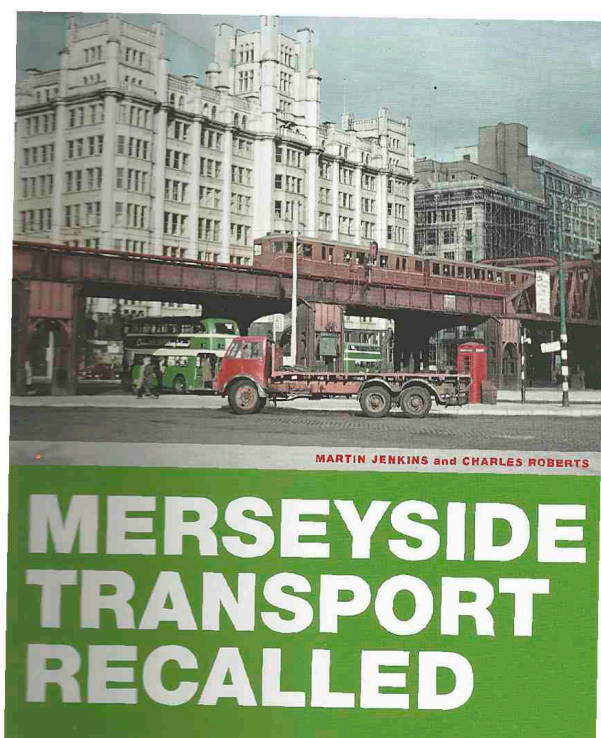
£22.50

This book is acclaimed as 'an unashamedly nostalgic pictorial portrait in full colour of the historic transport that has been part of the Merseyside townscape from the 1950s to the 1970s'. The book contains a vast array of different forms of transport, in rare photographs, mostly never seen before in print.

There are nearly 180 colour pictures in the 112 pages of this book, showing buses – Liverpool, Birkenhead, Wallasey and even St Helens Corporation, Crosville, Ribble and Lancashire United vehicles – Liverpool trams, the Liverpool Overhead Railway, many other trains, both goods and passenger – British

Railways and Mersey Docks & Harbour Board – ferries and ships of all sorts and even an aeroplane and hovercraft. About half the pages are 'road scenes'.

However, in spite of the Foden DG six-wheeler prominent on the cover, the book might be a disappointment to lorry enthusiasts since, apart from a few choice vehicles tantalisingly seen in the background of several shots, there aren't any pictures of lorries. This came as quite a surprise in a book on a major seaport, having seen, for example, Peter Davies' many lorry pictures in books and magazines over the years. So it could be argued that the book doesn't really live up to its title, but there are lots of lovely pictures if your transport tastes are wide-ranging.





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## LEYLAND TORQUE – NO 66 – WINTER 2014

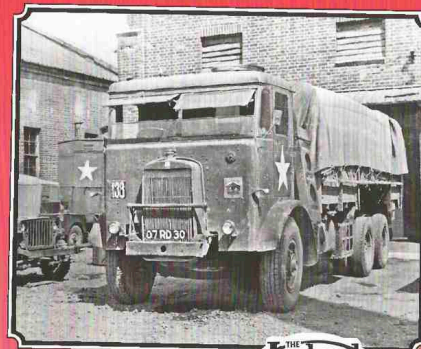
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Yet another issue of this interesting magazine, especially if you are an enthusiast of the Leyland Marque. There are articles on a wide range of subjects, looking back over the years and the products of the Leyland company, buses, lorries, at home and worldwide, as well as personalities associated with them. This issue includes items on a Lion in Australia, a rally in New Zealand and the Leyland Eight car, as well as the usual information on what were once 'run-of-the-mill' Leylands and the more unusual examples.

The membership secretary is John Howie, 37 Balcombe Gardens, Horley, Surrey RH6 9BY. Membership of the society costs £27 per year, and includes four issues of Leyland Torque, with 48 pages and about 64

## Leyland Torque

No.66 - WINTER 2014

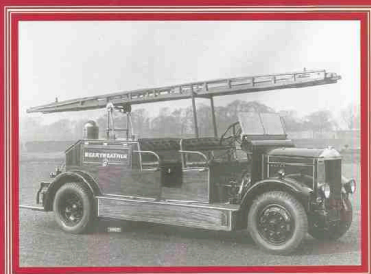


photographs, plus the annual Journal, the next of which is published in August. This is good value for money and recommended for anybody interested in the Leyland marque.

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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION BY THE FIRE BRIGADE SOCIETY

Celebrating The Society's 50th Anniversary in 2013

This is a special publication by The Fire Brigade Society, produced in 2013 to celebrate the Society's 50th Anniversary. It was a joint undertaking with the Fire Heritage Network UK, funded by the Society using material held by The Firefighter's Memorial Trust.

All the pictures in the book are taken from original Merryweather factory material, which members of the Society helped to preserve. It covers the people, products and history of the whole life of the company, with pictures of all forms of fire appliance, from horse-drawn manuals and steamers to motorised appliances through the ages, including exports and all sorts of different fire-fighting, escape and safety equipment. In 130 A4 pages, there are nearly 350 pictures, ten in colour, of which over 150 are of motorised fire appliances of all sorts and ages, including some most unusual vehicles.

The book is available through the Society's website. Along with membership of The Fire Brigade Society, this fascinating book has to be a must for all fire equipment enthusiasts.

## NARTM GAZETTE – NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT MODELLERS

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NARTM is an association dedicated to road transport modellers, whether they collect diecasts, build kits, convert models or scratch-build, catering for all scales and materials.

The magazine details regular local meetings and open days, on-line discussions, discounts from kit manufacturers and NARTM Gazette advertisers and entry to events, notably in connection with displays by association members. The association offers encouragement to those whose hobby can be somewhat solitary at times, as interaction with other members of NARTM, with hints and tips on modelling could be most helpful.

Members of NARTM receive four copies of this A5-sized Gazette each year, which includes news, reviews and articles for the road transport modeller. There are pictures of members' models and dioramas, which offer ideas, motivation and stimulation,

especially for the less experienced modeller.

■ NARTM has always had a presence at the Gaydon Classic Commercial Vehicle Show in June, but in 2015 will have double the usual area for its displays, including a feature table, where each modeller will put a single model of a particular type of vehicle – this years it's tankers. If you would like to take part alongside the usual exhibitors at this great show, please contact Kevin Green, 36 Alan Road, Darton, Barnsley S75 5NL, telephone 01226 383607 or e-mail chevyvanman@gmail.com

## National Association of Road Transport Modellers

Winter 2014/2015



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## MORE RAILWAY VANS

I refer to the February edition of *Vintage Roadscene*. First, can I add my two-pennorth regarding content? I think the magazine is pitched just about right. Most of your correspondents seem to agree. True, there are specialist magazines out there, including those dedicated to lorries, but for people like myself who have a general interest in transport, there is a limit to how many you can subscribe to. As it is, I subscribe monthly to four transport magazines; *Modern Railways*, which caters for today's railway, sister publication *Buses*, which does have a couple of pages devoted to vintage vehicles, *Backtrack*, which caters for historic rail transport and of course, *Vintage Roadscene*, which caters for all things road-related. It is

informative, tells a lot of the human stories and allows us to wallow in nostalgia, especially some of the street scenes. Keep up the good work.

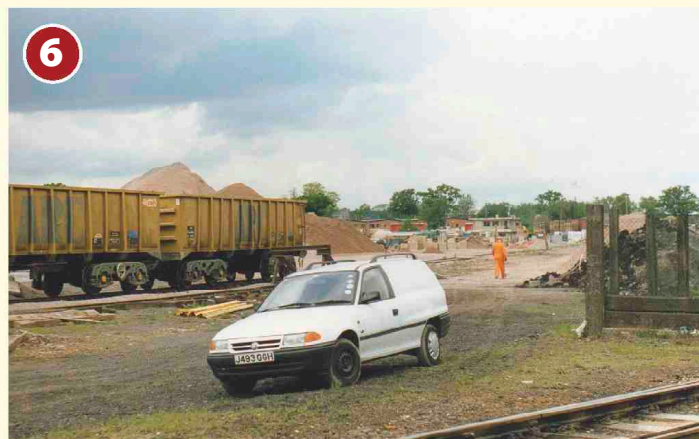
Now, in the February *Scene and Heard* section was a letter from John Clark about the photos you published of the railway parcels vans I sent in, published in the July issue. (By the way, I didn't actually work for NCL – I was in the depot, employed by BR.) I was particularly intrigued to find out the unusual Karrier Bantam which was at Woking for a short while is believed to have been one of only two produced. He went on to ask if I could forward any other photos I might have. Unfortunately, those I sent in were the bulk of the collection. Perhaps you might pass on a few others, which you yourself might find interesting?

**Number 1** is one of the Bedford-Hawsons, seen parked up in the railway staff car park at Woking, freshly repainted into REPS livery. This was the first lorry so treated to work out of Woking.

**No 2** is a close-up of the Atkinson Borderer, backing into the loading bay at Woking. Not a good picture but it does reveal registration details. **No 3** is a battered Leyland Boxer seen in Basingstoke.

**No 4** is a Leyland Boxer in use with NCL, seen in March 1981. I cannot recall where this photo was taken. I think it was a railway yard somewhere in Hampshire, my attention being drawn to the pair of Bristol K double deckers, the leading one being a former Southern Vectis bus judging by the registration number.

Whilst on the subject of railway vans,





here also are a couple of more recent times. Although British Rail lost all its operating licences and road fleet in 1968, it did continue to own and operate road vehicles for departmental use. Increasing numbers of cars and light vans were bought in the 1990s to make staff more mobile.

An example is the Ford Escort van, F89 SHT, (No 5) seen at Hoo Junction in November 1999. It was inherited by English Welsh & Scottish Railway (EWS) in 1996, when the BR freight operating companies were brought back together under privatisation. I think it was based at Temple Mills yard until transferred to Hoo Junction (Kent) around 1998. The picture shows it after it had been driven into a post by one of the mobile shunters. Repairs, quoted at £1,300, were well

in excess of what the van was worth, yet it was repaired and put back on the road, lasting for another two years before being withdrawn. It retained the British Rail logo and name to the end – a bit of a curiosity long after BR had been privatised. At the time, I didn't have an allocated van of my own and often took this out to visit various locations. It was extremely fast. Although based on the Ford Fiesta, the registration details recorded it as an Escort.

No 6 is a Vauxhall Astra van, one of dozens bought by BR before privatisation. J493 GGH was one of four allocated to Hoo Junction. It is seen at Crawley New Yard in Sussex.

No 7 show a couple of Leyland DAF vans belonging to the Stewarts Lane Depot (South London) re-railing gang, seen here attending to derailed coal wagons at Hoo Junction yard

in 1994.

No 8 was taken at the British Gypsum mine in Mountfield, East Sussex, around 1994. De-sulphurised limestone was like a gypsum substitute and cheaper than mining the stuff. It was brought down from Drax power station in rail containers. I believe the British Gypsum road fleet was owned and operated by Jempsons of Rye, road haulage contractors. The Volvo in the photo was one of two, no longer road legal and relegated to shunting duties at Mountfield, being used to transfer the containers between the railhead and the mine.

Nos 9-12 show the Karrier Bantam, Rail Express Parcels Dodge Walk-Thrus, Bedford TK and a Roadline 'Noddy' van.

**John Raggett, Meopham.**





## OLIVER TRACTOR

Please find attached two photographs taken last year at the Stony Stratford, Buckinghamshire vintage car gathering. I know tractors aren't usually the kind of fare you normally deal with, but I was wondering whether either you or your extremely knowledgeable fellow readers would be able to help provide more information about the Oliver Company, as I had not come across the name before (not that I am an expert on tractors by any means).

Also, as a relatively new subscriber (nearly a year now), I would like to add my opinion on the contents debate. From a newcomer's perspective, it's perfect, a great balance of old and of vehicles during their useful lives and of how the survivors are faring today. It's also marvellously nostalgic to see all these old photographs from decades past - I am avid collector of The Commercial Motor magazine, and it is always interesting to compare and contrast what was then



current and how they were used, and what is left for us to enjoy now. However, it is mixed with a great deal of sadness: all the names of British commercial vehicle manufacture now consigned to history and the museum.

If the magazine continues as it has been during my readership (although change is also a necessary and most welcome thing sometimes), then I shall continue to be reader and subscriber.

**Simon Marshall-Jones, via e-mail**

*Oliver was an American tractor maker, from the 1930s onwards, after four agricultural equipment companies merged. The company took over crawler-maker Cletrac in 1944, and developed a number of different models, including diesels, even after being bought by lorry-maker White in 1960, although the Oliver name was dropped in 1973, production continuing today under the AGCO brand.*



## MORE TANKER MEMORIES

I was given issue 180 the other day by my brother. The letter from Brian Finnie, now retired from Harry Lawson brought back many memories of those days. Dick retired a couple of years ago, and Phil, (or Eli as he was sometimes known), is now in charge. They were both very interested when I showed them Brian's letter.

We sent ammonia up to Perth, until they got their own plant. Quite often we could have up to six or seven in to load, only trouble was, when they were all together, I couldn't understand them very well.

At one time in the 1990s, two would come down from Perth on Monday, as Brian said, load down towards Warwickshire and then work out of Enstone, near Chipping Norton, coming back to Elvington to load North on Friday.

The Lawson drivers were no bother; I think we all worked on the 'do as you would be done to' principle. If you can't find space to print this, could please pass it on to Brian.

**Peter Wheeler, via e-mail**

## PAPER DELIVERIES

The Huddersfield Examiner used to be delivered by bus, at least in the 1960s.

**Stephen Clegg, via e-mail**

## DAILY MAIL VEHICLES

Arthur Charlton of Potato Wharf, Salford, had a fleet of about 30 Bedford TKs on this work in the late 1970s-early '80s. Then along came Eddie Shah and Maxwell, which started the end of newspapers in Manchester.

**R E Burke, Manchester**

## RELIANCE REMEMBERED

Following up the articles on the AEC Reliance, here is a picture of GDF 650L, the ex-Marchants of Cheltenham, the Plaxton-bodied Reliance which my father, Bill Berry and I owned.

**Howard Berry, via e-mail**



## UNITED COUNTIES' BREAKDOWN

Regarding your article on bus breakdowns, I believe my late friend Mr Joe Hunt laid this to rest at the Molesworth yard, the alumium body and the bronze in the diffs would have been too big a temptation to keep it complete. Rest in Peace both of them.

**David Crouch, Crouch Recovery, Kibworth**







### BUTCHERS VAN AT BARRINGTON

At what, unfortunately could well be the last time the Vintage Sports-Car Club meet at the annual New Year Day event on Barrington Village Green, Shepreth classic car enthusiast, Ben Hogan proudly presented his newly-acquired rare 1929 Austin 7 former butcher's van. It spent a 40 years of yeoman service with Marshes Butchers.

Partly because of the retirement of organiser, Monty Goding, who has dedicated 40 years to organising this event, and the monthly meetings, and also to health and safety rulings governing the use of the Green, it may well prove a problem finding a replacement organiser who must be prepared to take out a responsibility insurance to cover public safety, and possible damage to the grass.

Despite an extremely cold wind the meeting was, as usual, enthusiastically well attended by both vehicle entries and public support.

Clive Porter, via e-mail

### THIRD SCAMMELL TOWNSMAN

In the letters section of Classic & Vintage Commercial, there is a letter referring to the existence of two Scammell Townsman vehicles. There is a third in the Bury Transport Museum, Greater Manchester. It is January-August 1967-registered, with a van-bodied trailer, as the enclosed pictures show. There are also a Mechanical Horse and Scarab awaiting restoration. I think there is also a four-wheeled chassis in existence there. I hope this information is useful.

F Eckersley, Bolton, Lancs



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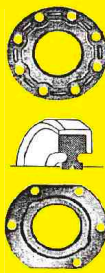
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### DEBEN MILLS LORRIES

Following my letter about T J Kidner in issue 183, here is a picture of our Morris Commercial, FRT 412 (East Suffolk, 1946), from the 1950s. This was powered by a six cylinder petrol engine with a five-speed gear box and was quite a 'flying' machine

After this vehicle was taken out of service, it was abandoned at the top of our coal yard for several years before being cut up for scrap. During the early 1960s, this became my large play toy!

The Garrett 3 ton Superheated Steam Wagon, BJ 3856 (East Suffolk, 1918), was built at the Richard Garrett works at Leiston, Suffolk and was used until the 1930s. My father, Roger Rackham, informs me it was parked up in a shed by the mill after being taken out of service and remained there until just after World War II, when it was cut up and sold for £100! As a child, this engine was his large play toy!

Both photos were taken outside Deben Mills at Wickham Market. I haven't been able to locate old photos of our Ford Thames ET4 or the Thames Trader to date, although I know they exist here somewhere. These both had four cylinder diesel engines and had hydraulically operated sack loaders fitted to the rear.

Our business was founded by my Great Grandfather, Reuben Rackham, in 1885 and still operates from the same site on the River Deben, at Wickham Market, Suffolk.

David Rackham, via e-mail

### ARMY DRIVER

Seeing the picture of the Bedford OYD, complete with camouflage net on page 7 of January's issue of Vintage Roadscene took me back to the summer of 1955, when I drove one just like it.

I was in the Royal Fusiliers and we were on a scheme on Salisbury Plain; the main theme of the scheme was camouflage. The riflemen were all in trenches and I found a small spinney, where there was just room for one lorry to back in among the trees, and spent a pleasant three days there.

Then the MT officer appeared and said: "Get the truck out and drive me to the forward echelon." As he had an Austin Champ of his own, I wondered why he wanted me to drive. Maybe it was so well-concealed that he didn't want to disturb it. When we arrived at the echelon, he said: "Wait here, I won't be long."

I thought I had better drape the camouflage net over the truck, with all these officers about, and I had just finished doing so, when I saw and heard the RSM shout: "Get some bloody sticks under that net and break up the outline." I had sticks in the back for just that purpose, and ducked under the net to fit them all round the truck.

It suited me fine as, while I was inside the net, he couldn't see that I hadn't had a haircut for almost a month and my BD (uniform) looked as if I had been sleeping in it.

When the scheme was over, the RASC took our battalion back



to barracks (in Dover) and four of us drivers were told to move into Rollstone Camp on the plain and, next morning, start picking up all the corrugated iron sheets that had been used to hide the trenches.

It rained heavily all night and the tracks on the plain had already been churned up by tanks and Bren gun carriers and were now deep, soft mud. As the Bedford OYD didn't have four wheel drive, we were constantly getting stuck, so the officer in charge said that he would postpone picking up the sheets until the weather improved, and told us to return to Dover.

I eventually got the job of driving the ration truck, a Bedford RL, the first lorry that I drove with a synchromesh gearbox. In the enclosed photograph, I am on the right, wearing battle dress.

Harry Coughlan, Rayleigh, Essex

### THE FODEN AGAIN

Having finished reading issue 181 for December, with the picture of Foden, F580 XWT, the registration rang a bell. A quick look in the album found a picture of this vehicle, taken at the Enthusiasts' Day at Malvern, in 2012. I also have a picture of it in the ownership of Hewden Stuart Plant Hire.

I also have some photos taken at the Rally of the Giants, which was seen in an article in the June issue, number 175. A very interesting day, if I remember correctly...

John Hunt, Bedford.





## A WORKING LIFE WITH TIPPERS

When I left school, I got an apprenticeship with a local haulier. I worked there when I was about 14, during my school holidays, washing the wagons off, cleaning the yard and garage, then greasing and thigs like that. The company ran Leyland Reivers and Bison six-wheelers, Octopus and Scammell Routeman eight-wheelers and some Seddon-Atki six and eight-wheelers. Later on, there were Constructor six and eight-wheelers.

The company more or less standardised on Leyland. They were always a good tipper chassis. The Reiver was nice and light – it could carry 18 tons – but was so under-powered and the clutch and gearbox were moderate.

I could pull a Reiver in, pull the

gearbox out, strip it, rebuild it with second-hand parts – no new stuff – change the clutch and re-fit the gearbox in a day – not bad for an 18 year old! The rear suspension wore out quickly and the springs broke on the road.

The replacement Constructor 6 was a better machine, apart from one of them cracking in the middle of the rear bogie. Hargreaves, the dealer at the time, supplied us with two new chassis rails, which we had to fit. The problem was that we had to drill the holes – and the problem with this was that the boss wouldn't buy any new drill bits. (In fact, they didn't buy much new, apart from flash cars for themselves...)

We didn't have much gear in the garage, most things were a struggle. Even breakdowns; you never got a nice ride out in the summer – it was

always gearbox or transfer box on the A68 at Tow Law in December in minus three degrees and snowing.

We also had a few International and CAT 941B drotts – and these were a nightmare too...

The wagons always had small diesel tanks, so they could carry more, but they never ran out of diesel in the summer. It was always 6.30 at night in a blizzard – and I was going out with my girlfriend that night...

The eight-wheeled Constructors were all right, apart from the rear diffs. The problem was that the earlier ones we had were powered by the TL11 engines with 209 bhp. The newer ones were Rolls-Royce 265-powered and the old Albion diffs could not take the increased torque of the more powerful engines. We changed many a diff in an opencast mine or steelworks.

The company didn't have spare wagons either, so any broken springs, hub seals, brake re-lines and so on were done at night. My finishing time was anything between six and ten at night.

I was young and daft, going home at ten o'clock, black as the roads; tea, bath, bed. When you have worked anywhere like this when you are young, any job afterwards is easy. Like now, I work on V8-powered Scania Toplines and DAFs. I haven't changed a spring for years and the last clutch was two years ago.

**Andrew Liddell, Bishop Auckland.**

*Careful Andrew, you'll have to do one now you've said that... This letter came with his order for a copy of Terry Marshall's book on his life with tippers and it was just so good, it had to go in here!*

## CHELTENHAM COACH STATION

The piece on the model of Cheltenham Coach Station was great. I remember it from the early 1950s. We started at Victoria Coach Station, with a stop halfway, always with Red & White Coaches, and manly Albion half-cabs (they kept pace with the new full-fronted coaches, though...). As a young teenager, it was fascinating to see coaches from so many places, in different colours and liveries, all in one place at the same time.

By comparison, in the 1950s and '60s, on summer Sunday evenings, it was possible to see and hear many buses and coaches, coming up the (slight) gradient on the A23 from Brighton, in the villages just north of Redhill in Surrey, with hundreds of cars and taxis mixed in. Ah, the good old days...

**Les Edwards, Sutton Bridge, Lincs.**

## CAUGHT AGAIN

In Allan Bedford's 'Caught in Time' article in the January issue, the Leyland Cruiser D557 FOU was said to be with John Andrew. Quite right, it is seen in the enclosed picture, at Malvern in March 2012, with John's other two BMC classics on the trailer.

There was also a picture of Hobson's ERF, XDB 235K, which was still on the scene in 2002, when I photographed it at the classic truck show at Gaydon. I hope this may be of interest.

**Barry Fenn, Telford, Shropshire.**



**NEXT  
MONTH...**

**IN THE  
APRIL ISSUE,  
ON SALE  
MARCH  
20TH**

\* Circumstances might cause the planned contents to change

# Luton Vans - Another Selection of Scenes Past



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# The Latest Fashion

**T**o tie-in with our Earls Court shows feature, here are a couple of period adverts for what must have been the best-known products of Duple the coachbuilder, courtesy of Ray Newcomb. You'll notice the invitation to see the latest designs at the show...

Remember how the car manufacturers used to update their models with a new grille or other styling feature each year, to stimulate sales with 'built-in obsolescence'. Well, the same seems to have been true when it came to coach designs.

Here we have adverts from 1959 and 1960, showing the Duple Super Vega coach body, as fitted to the Bedford SB chassis. The 1959 design was a development of the original Super Vega, featuring the famous 'butterfly' grille, which was fitted from 1955 to 1958. It's surprising how a change in the shape of the windscreen, the grille and the chrome trim on the sides – with corresponding changes in the shape of the area painted in the second colour – can change the aspect of the whole vehicle.

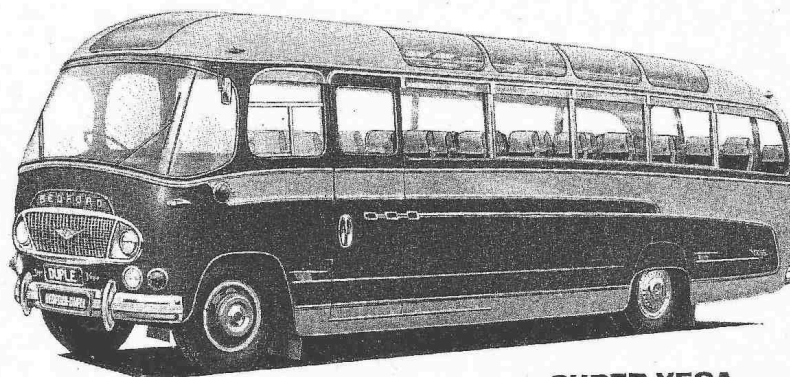
The same is true, to a lesser extent between the 1959 design – still being built in 1960 – and the 1961 design, introduced at the show at the end of 1960. This time, it's the screen, grille and beading which were subtly different again. You have to ask yourself whether the average coach passenger would really notice the difference, but the operator's competitors certainly would have...

Apart from the fine words about the vehicle, the ad for the 1960 model has some sort of winter sports competitor doing something dangerous-looking in the background. The advertising copy includes the details that your 41 passengers can be accommodated within a width of 7 ft 6 ins or 8 ft, and propelled by a Bedford diesel or petrol chassis – and there were plenty more specification choices, once you consulted your Bedford dealer.

The ad for the 1961 model, apart from the invitation to Stands 35, 36 and 38 at the 'Commercial Motor Exhibition (you're expected to know it's at Earls Court) to see the Duple and Willowbrook coaches and buses – the latter company having just been taken over and soon to be known as Duple (Midland) – majors on the economic

angle of choosing the best value vehicles for efficiency.

When you consider just how many of these coaches were built at the time, there are precious few left these days. They were worked to death, even after they had gone out of fashion, as they suited smaller operators and could be used as buses and for school and other contracts; they were reliable and cheap to run. Now just a few remain to remind us of those golden days of coaching.



The 1961 Duple-Bedford **SUPER VEGA**  
41 passenger coach

An outstanding new coach with many brand new features including new front end design, wide vision screen and sumptuous interior decor. A coach that really lives up to its looks. Full details from your Bedford dealer.



## "It's a matter of ECONOMICS

Good economics means good business, but it does not mean always accepting the lowest offer. It means getting the best value for money. That's why I choose Duple Coaches. Really striking vehicles that do the job efficiently and give complete comfort, safety and low running costs. I run Duple Super Vegas, they keep my business a really economical proposition. //

# DUPL E

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WILLOWBROOK  
coaches and buses  
on  
**STANDS**  
**35 36 & 38**  
COMMERCIAL MOTOR  
EXHIBITION  
SEPT. 23 – OCT. 1

## Go ahead Operators ....

She's sleek, she's graceful...  
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passengers go for. This 1960 Super-Vega  
has all the 'sit-back-and-enjoy-yourself'  
comfort that makes for successful trips  
—and many of 'em! So if you want to  
go ahead, start now with the  
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*Details May Be Subject to Change*



**29012 GM Standard Fleetline** **GREY GREEN**  
Depicted in Grey Green livery, at the time Arriva was being formed, this GM Standard Fleetline works route 179 to Barking. Registered GDB 162N, fleet number 496 displays colourful in house adverts for The Cowie Group.

**JANUARY RELEASE**



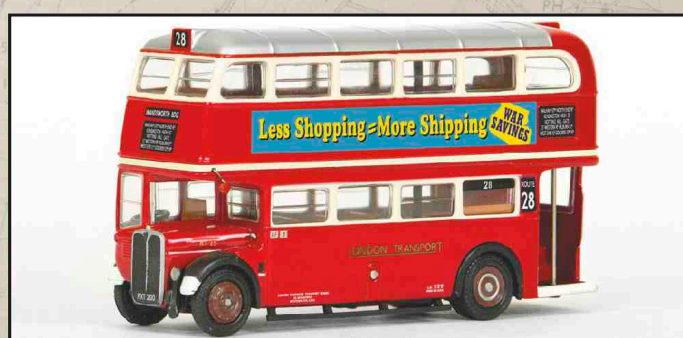
**29632 Leyland Olympian** **NORTHUMBRIA**  
This very distinctive livery makes a welcome return on our Leyland Olympian as buses from the North East are proving very collectable. Registered C616 ANW, fleet number 313 operates route X 26 to Blyth.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**17311 Leyland National Mkl Long 1 Door** **GREEN LINE N.B.C.**  
The Leyland National is a very popular model with our collectors and this Green Line N.B.C. version is sure to please. Registered NPD 141L, fleet number LNC 41 works route 387 to Aldbury a lovely little Village not far from the vehicles base at Tring Garage.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**34003 AEC 2RT2 Bus** **LONDON TRANSPORT**  
Decorated in London Transport Central wartime livery this AEC 2RT2 works the popular route 28 to Wandsworth Bridge. Registered FXT 200, fleet number RT 25 carries nostalgic period adverts.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**18013 Park Royal Fleetline** **BIRMINGHAM CORPORATION TRANSPORT**  
The distinctive dark blue and two tone beige livery of Birmingham Corporation Transport look very nice on our Daimler model. Registered 270 GON this Park Royal Fleetline, numbered 3270 works route 58 to Sheldon via Coventry Road.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**38117 Bristol VRT** **MIDLAND GENERAL**  
Following the popularity and sell out release of our AEC Weymann RLH styled bus this Bristol VRT is likely to follow suit. Registered BNU 680G, fleet number 316, this attractive blue & cream Midland General bus works route B1 to Ripley, Derbyshire.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**28909 GM Standard Atlantean** **YORKSHIRE RIDER LEEDS**  
Our GM Standard Atlantean adds to the model fleet of Yorkshire Rider vehicles. Registered UNA 781S, fleet number 6419 works route 44A to Pudsey and fits in nicely with our Leeds Bristol VR III.

**FEBRUARY RELEASE**



**17510 Leyland National Mkl Long 1 Door** **KELVIN CUMBERNAULD'S BUSES**  
Leyland National AST 156W has had a long career in various liveries from its original owners of Highland Omnibuses to First Provincial at opposite ends of the Country. Depicted here in Kelvin Scottish Cumbernauld's Buses, fleet number 1256 works route X 37 to Bo' ness, Cumbernauld & Falkirk.

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